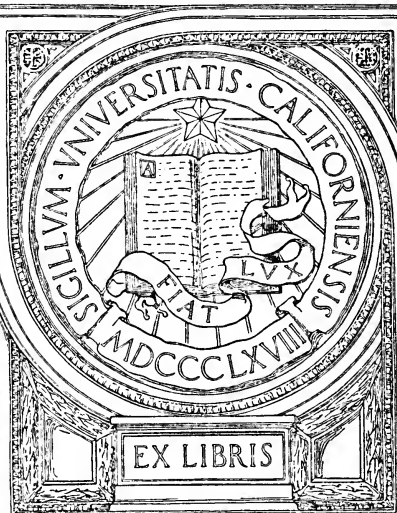
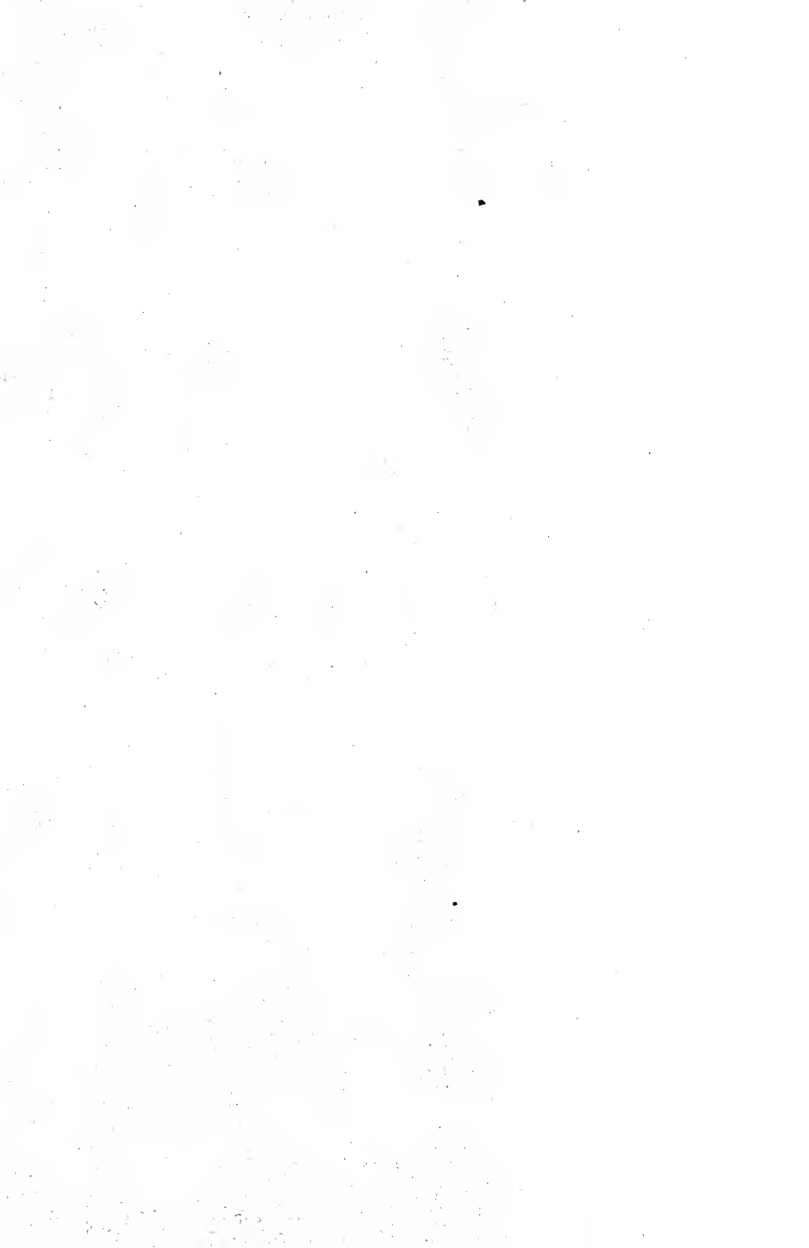


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THE QUEST OF THE INDIES



COLUMBUS

[Frontispiece

THE QUEST OF THE INDIES

BY

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OXFORD
BASIL BLACKWELL

1920

THE WORLD
OF THE FUTURE

P R E F A C E

COLUMBUS discovered America. The words enshrine a historical fact familiar to the mass of civilised people ; in many cases also they express the sum total of what is known about the Admiral and his age. Possibly he himself would have been satisfied that it should be so ; for it is the very essence of fame, this enduring association of just a name and a deed, while the man's own personality fades into the mist of secondary things. Yet the deed shines amidst a galaxy of others by every right scarcely less illustrious. Ere Columbus sailed, the world had wakened ; brave men were putting out in frail ships for coasts far across the old limited horizons. And after his death, through Eastern seas and Western lands, fierce swords of Portugal and Spain cut a path to treasure and empire beyond the dreams of kings.

From the lives of some of the adventurers of that gallant day, and of days preceding it,

this unpretending book essays to lift the curtain for a moment—no more. For a longer, closer view you must read the pages of the great historians. It will stir your blood to do so.

R. D.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I MUST thank the Cambridge University Press for the use of the maps on pp. 77 and 221; Messrs. George Philip & Son, Ltd., for the use of that on p. 135; and Mr. Geoffrey Callender, of the Royal Naval College, Osborne, for kindly reading through the MS. and contributing some valuable suggestions. It is perhaps unnecessary, in this latter day, to acknowledge one's indebtedness to the great historians of the earlier nineteenth century. Among more modern authorities I owe most to the writings of Professor C. R. Beazley, who is unsurpassed in his knowledge of the period.

R. D.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
THE MEDIÆVAL WORLD	I

CHAPTER II

THE FARTHER EAST	16
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

THE HEEL OF AFRICA	48
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

ROUND THE CAPE TO INDIA	70
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

THE PORTUGUESE EASTERN EMPIRE	83
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS	100
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII

	PAGE
LATER VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS . . .	132

CHAPTER VIII

CENTRAL AMERICA : DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC	154
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

MAGELLAN'S VOYAGE	172
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO . . .	182
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

THE CONQUEST OF PERU	213
--------------------------------	-----

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY	231
---------------------------------	-----

INDEX	235
-----------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

COLUMBUS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HERODOTUS	7
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY	13
MARCO POLO	30
PORTRAIT OF PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR	54
<i>(From Portuguese Portraits.)</i>	
PORTUGUESE COLONIAL EXPANSION, FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES	77
PORTRAIT OF ALBUQUERQUE	90
<i>(From Portuguese Portraits.)</i>	
COLUMBUS LANDING IN THE NEW WORLD	117
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MARTIN BEHAIM	135
CENTRAL AMERICA : COLUMBUS AND HIS SUCCESSORS	143
BALBOA DISCOVERING THE PACIFIC	165
PORTUGUESE CARRACK, FIFTEENTH CENTURY	175

	PAGE
PORTRAIT OF CORTES	185
(From Prescott's <i>Conquest of Mexico</i> : Bentley's second edition, 1847.)	
MAP OF MEXICO	191
PORTRAIT OF PIZARRO	214
(From Prescott's <i>Conquest of Peru</i> : Bentley's second edition, 1847.)	
SPANISH EXPANSION IN THE NEW WORLD	221

THE QUEST OF THE INDIES

CHAPTER I

THE MEDIÆVAL WORLD

AT the beginning of the eighth century the eastern and western extremities of Southern Europe suffered an invasion which in the one case reached as far as the Bosphorus, in the other beyond the Pyrenees. The sudden expansion of Arab power after Mohammed's proclamation of his crusade is unparalleled in history. For a very long period the Arabs had inhabited their inaccessible deserts, one of the few Asiatic races to acknowledge no foreign conquest. At the date of the Prophet's birth they were for the most part idolaters; but all religions were tolerated, and side by side with the fire-worship of the Zoroastrian the creeds of Jew and Christian found adherents among the tribesmen of the peninsula.

Mohammed was born in Mecca in the year 569. At the age of forty he began to give utterance to the faith he had come to preach : "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet." Before the end of his life twenty years later he held all Arabia in his hand. Death scarcely interrupted his conquests. It was the will of God, he said, that the new religion should be spread by the sword. The Caliphs, his successors, carried out his command to the letter. Their armies gave them a more than admirable support ; the prizes of earthly victory were apparent enough to the dwellers in that sterile land, while every soldier who fell in the sacred cause had the Prophet's own promise of immediate paradise. Within half a century her Egyptian and Asiatic provinces had been torn from the Eastern Empire, Persia had been overcome, the southern coast of the Mediterranean from Alexandria to the Pillars of Hercules owned the sway of the conquerors. This seemed for a moment the limit of the tide. At the eastern horn of the crescent Byzantium beat them back with her Greek fire. But in the west the year 711 saw them surge across the strait to crush the last of the Visigothic kings, and a little later they had swept through

Spain and established themselves in Central Gaul. There at last they were held. Upon the plain of Tours Charles Martel and his Franks overcame them in a desperate fight, slew their leader, with countless of his followers, and finally forced them back across the Pyrenees. Christendom was saved from a danger such as had not threatened it since the days of Attila. Yet by the middle of the century Europe might well view with dismay the extent of the Moslem conquests. Through Spain, save for the Biscay mountain fringe, through North Africa and Egypt, through Syria, Persia, Babylonia, North India, and parts of Central Asia, Islam had spread a new language and a new religion.

From the point of view of advance in geographical knowledge the Arab conquests had two principal effects. In the first place, the Moslems controlled the chief Asiatic trade routes from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, and shut out the merchants of the Christian Mediterranean States from direct commercial intercourse with India, and beyond, at the very period when the products of those regions were becoming, generation by generation, the objects of more eager European desire. Their possession of the Gibraltar Strait, too, sealed the outlet

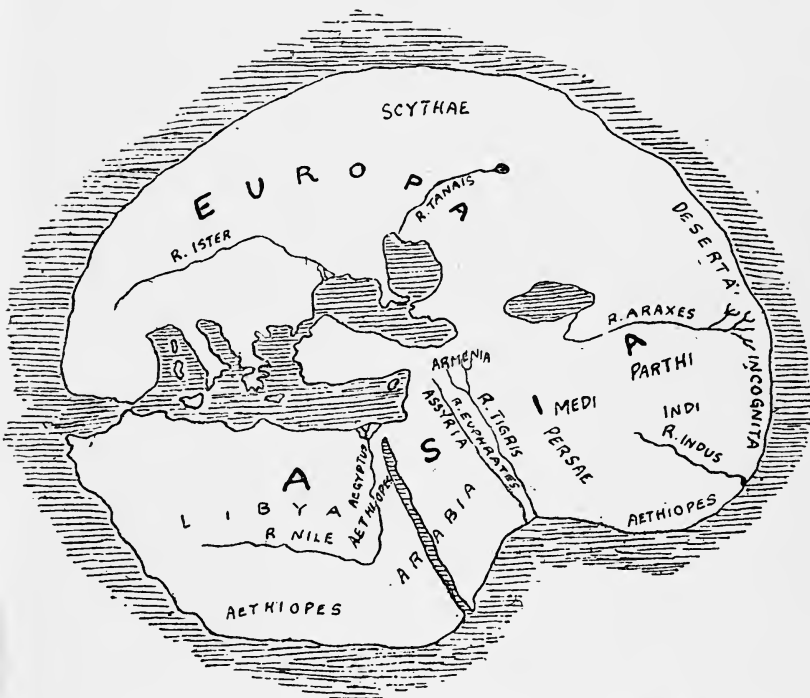
into the Atlantic, and postponed for long ages any serious attempt to explore the unknown ocean-way to the riches of the Indies. In the second place, they took the old Greek ideas of the world and reintroduced them to Christendom, with scarcely a modification till the tenth century. The earlier Arab crusaders seem to have set small value on any literary productions but the sacred writings of the Prophet. It is said that when Amrou took Alexandria he wrote to the Caliph Omar to ask what he should do with the books of the great library there. Omar replied: "If these books agree with the Koran, they are useless; if they disagree with it, they are pernicious. In either case they ought to be destroyed." Accordingly they were distributed among the furnaces of the four thousand baths of the city, which they fed for half a year. But before long a more enlightened spirit prevailed, and for two centuries Bagdad and Cordova stood with Byzantium as the recognised interpreters of the ancient Greek culture to Italy, Germany, and France. On geographical questions especially the Mohammedan theories were in no danger of contradiction. Arab soldiers and traders were travelling in lands untrodden by European feet ;

no European mariner had voyaged in the Eastern seas that year by year grew more familiar with the Arab sails.

The geographer whom the Moslems adopted as guide-in-chief in their conjectures about the shape and structure of the world was Ptolemy, who had flourished at Alexandria in the second century. The choice was an unfortunate one. Ptolemy had been the first scientist of his day. It is to him that we owe the definite measurement of the earth's surface into degrees of latitude and longitude ; and his theory of the celestial universe,¹ for long the official doctrine of the Roman Church, held the field for 1,400 years. But in his scheme of the world his

¹ Ptolemy maintained that the earth was a ball fixed in the centre of the universe. There were four elements—earth, the innermost, supporting water, air above water, fire above air. Beyond the fourth element stretched the expanse of ether. Ether was enclosed by a succession of rotating spheres or zones, one within another, crystalline shells to each of which a heavenly body was attached and thus made to move round the earth. The number of the spheres was at first eight, the innermost being that of the moon, followed in order by those of Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the fixed stars. Later a ninth was added to explain the Precession of the Equinoxes, and finally a tenth to account for day and night. This last made a complete revolution from east to west in twenty-four hours and carried all the others with it.

imagination ran away with him and betrayed him into errors which for centuries proved stumbling-blocks to his disciples. The worst mistake he made was to fill up the whole of the Southern Hemisphere with Africa, and, by joining that continent to China in the Far East, to convert the Indian Ocean into an inland sea. Before his time the more ancient Greeks, with Strabo at their head, had evolved a theory nearer the truth, but it was not until long exploration in the eastern sea had taught the Arabs to doubt the hypothesis of the Alexandrian that they lent an ear to the more accurate, if less ambitious, conclusions of his predecessors. Meanwhile through the Dark Ages Islam built up, and Christendom accepted, an idea of the world based partly on the science of Ptolemy and partly on geographical hints gleaned from the Hebrew Pentateuch. The earth was a disc, or a ball, fixed in the centre of the universe. Round it, once in twenty-four hours, moved the sun, moon, and stars, causing the alternations of day and night. Arim, cupola of the earth, lay somewhere in the Indian Ocean between Comorin and Madagascar. On the edges of the world, to north and south of Arim and equidistant from it, were the poles; at similar



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HERODOTUS, ABOUT 440 B.C.
(After Spiuner).

intervals to east and west of it stood the Pillars of Alexander and Hercules, marking the limit of the march of either hero. Thus were settled the centre and the four corners of the earth. There were 360 degrees of longitude—180 of habitable land, 180 of sea. The seven climatic zones corresponded with the seven great empires of the world. A childish business the whole thing seems to us; not so to the men of that simpler age. It is only necessary to glance at the records of the Christian pilgrims from the days of Constantine to the Syrian Crusades, or, for that matter, beyond the Crusades, to see how potent a spell such a scheme, with its definite symmetry and its apparent reconciliation of science and legend, could cast over the mediæval imagination. Nor was it only the ruder minds that succumbed to the wizard's wand of Ptolemy and his Arab followers. Long after the scholastic philosophy was firmly seated in the universities that sprang from the schools of Charlemagne, we find the greatest of European thinkers, our own Roger Bacon amongst them, hardly a step in advance of the geographical science of five hundred years before their era.

Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Places of

Syria began in the days of Constantine the Great, whose British mother, Helena, visited Palestine and built a church at Bethlehem. The year 333 saw the first Christian geography, a guide-book from Bordeaux to Jerusalem. The route given in this, by North Italy, Aquileia, Sirmium, Constantinople, and Asia Minor, furnished a way for thousands of pilgrims during the next three centuries. Only a very few of these strayed from the beaten path or made any fresh contribution to geographical knowledge. Antoninus of Placentia, who lived in the time of the Emperor Justinian, left an account of his wanderings which reveals the hold that legend and tradition had on even the more enlightened Christians of his day. The Samaritans, he said, hated the Christians and would hardly speak to them; "and beware of spitting in their country, for they will never forgive it." Nothing could live or float in the Dead Sea, but was instantly swallowed up. The Jordan opened a passage for pilgrims, "and stood up in a heap every year at the Epiphany." The story that the salt pillar of Lot's wife had diminished in size through being licked was a lie; the statue was exactly the same as it had always been. At Gilboa "no

rain or dew ever fell, and devils appeared nightly, whirled about like fleeces of wool or the waves of the sea." Antoninus returned by way of the Red Sea and Egypt. He travelled up the Nile to the Cataracts and saw the crocodiles in the river. Alexandria he judged "a splendid but frivolous city, a lover of pilgrims but swarming with heresies." And so home.

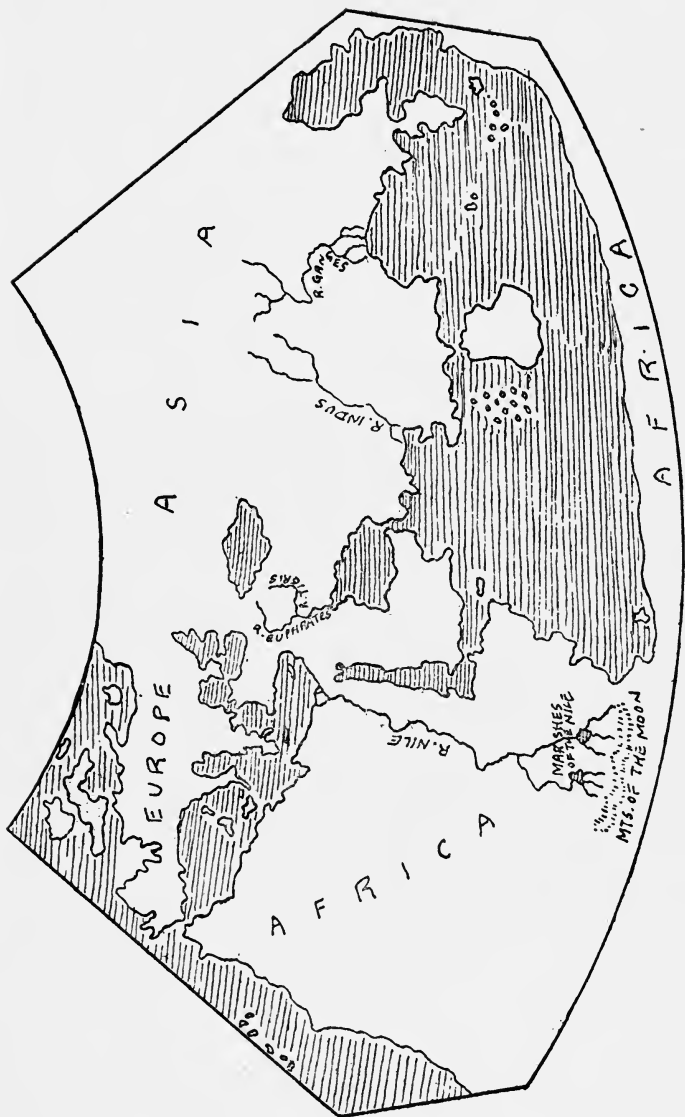
Contemporary with Antoninus was Cosmas Indicopleustes.¹ Cosmas was a pilgrim with a purpose. He made several voyages, and finally retired into a Sinai cloister. Here he wrote a record of the places he had visited, and gave a tolerable second-hand description of India. Here, too, he worked out in the *Christian Topography*, by which he is best remembered, his vindication of the Scriptural account of the world, and denounced the false and heathen doctrine of the rotundity of the earth. According to Cosmas the universe was a rectangular plane, its length just double its breadth. In the centre of this was our world, surrounded by ocean. Beyond the ocean lay the outer

¹ A curious name. Indicopleustes should signify "the man who sailed to India," yet he probably never reached India proper. Cosmas, too, is doubtful; perhaps it is merely connected with his reputation as a cosmographer.

world where men lived before the Flood. The sun moved round a conical mountain in the north, round its summit in summer and its base in winter, which accounted for the difference in the length of the days. The universe was vaulted by the four walls of the sky meeting in the "dome of heaven," each wall fastened to one of the edges of the outer world. Some way up the sky was the firmament, its floor covered, naturally enough, by "the waters that be above the firmament." Above this was Paradise; below lived the angels, "servants of God to men." As for the earth being a sphere, the authority of Scripture reduced any such theory to an absurdity. If it were, how, for instance, could rain be said, as in the Psalms, to "descend" in those regions where it could only come up? Equally ridiculous was the idea which attributed motion to the world. "Earth is fixed in its foundations." "Thou hast made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved," the "round world" referred to being, of course, the ocean-encompassed portion of the universe in which we live.

By the Arabs themselves, however, some geographical progress was effected. The Caliphs from the first caused surveys to be made of

the regions conquered by their armies, and every Mohammedan had perforce to travel once at least in his lifetime to complete the pilgrimage to Mecca enjoined by the Sacred Book. Again, the Arab was wider than the Christian range. We hear of no Christian pilgrim venturing so far as Bagdad, but with the Moslems this was but the starting-point for the Farther East. From the year 800 they had embarked on the exploration and settlement of the south-eastern shores of Africa, and finally penetrated as far as Sofala; the Arabian Sea was theirs; they had colonies on the western coast of India, and gradually got into their hands the whole trade of the Indian Ocean. It was impossible that they should not learn something, even had they been unintelligent; and unintelligent they were not, nor unenterprising, in their pursuit of knowledge. The Caliph Almamoum (about 830) gathered to his court at Bagdad all the chief philosophers of Islam, among them the geographer Massoudy, acquainted with every country from Spain to China, Solyman the Merchant, who had voyaged in the "Sea of Pitchy Darkness" east of Asia, and was one of the originals of *Sindbad the Sailor*, and Alfergany, author of the first Arab treatise on



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PTOLEMY (A.D. 150)
 Africa extends southward indefinitely to fill up the Southern Hemisphere.
 (After Sprunet.)

the astrolabe. This prince also built two observatories, and had a chart made on which was written the latitude and longitude of every place within the compass of Arab knowledge.

It was not, however, till after the inroads of the Turks and the waning of the power of Bagdad, that Moslem geography found its most advanced exponent in the Moor Edrisi, born in the year 1099 at Ceuta of Africa. After thirty years of travel he settled at Palermo, where Roger the Norman reigned. Here for fifteen years he studied, and finally finished his celestial sphere and terrestrial disc of silver, on which were inscribed "all the circuit of the known world and all the rivers thereof." For this achievement Roger made him a Count of Sicily. He also presented him with a rich ship's cargo and with all the silver that was left over after the completion of the disc and sphere. Yet Edrisi's map, as reconstructed by a modern Frenchman, shows a very small advance on Ptolemy's of a thousand years before. Though he does not actually join Africa to China in the East, he fills up practically the whole of the Southern Hemisphere with the *pays inhabités (à cause de la chaleur)* of the

unknown continent. He makes the south coast of Asia run in an almost straight line from the Persian Gulf to its further extremity. He gives to his Mediterranean countries shapes that are a grotesque parody of reality, while Britain (though this, perhaps, is pardonable) looks like a large cloud in the north. The western edge of his map he embroiders with an impossibly regular succession of gratuitous islands; and the sources of the Nile present the appearance of ten strange fungi springing from the marshes that lay in the neighbourhood of the Mountains of the Moon.

CHAPTER II

THE FARTHER EAST

IN the eleventh century the history of the lands about the eastern end of the Mediterranean took a turn that had an important effect in bringing them into closer contact with Europe. This development was the invasion of the Bagdad Caliphate by the Seljukian Turks. These Tartars of Central Asia, proselytes to Mohammedanism, were in every point of culture many stages behind the Arabs into whose territories they now poured. Nomads, dwellers in tents, barbarians savagely intolerant of the more ordered ways of a civilisation they did not understand, between the years 1065 and 1084 they wrested from the Caliph nearly the whole of his possessions in Syria and Asia Minor. The touch of the Mongol was always blight and death. Of Attila it had been said in the old days that the grass never grew again where the hoof of his horse

had trodden. So now civilisation withered before the Turkish advance.

It was not the Arabs alone who were affected by the invasion. Christendom soon began to view with rage and disgust the doings of the new holders of Syria. Hitherto pilgrims had always been allowed free access to Jerusalem ; indeed the Caliphs had regarded their visits as a source of revenue, and the objects of their veneration had been carefully protected and preserved. But the Turks were no sooner established than they set themselves to insult and ill-use the Christians and to profane the Holy Places. Some churches they destroyed, others they converted into stables. To the anger which these doings aroused in Europe was added a feeling of alarm when the conquering hordes pushed their way north and west and threatened the Bosphorus.

The fusion of the Latin and Teutonic elements in most of the provinces of the old Roman Empire had by this time been completed. Many of the languages of modern Europe had taken definite forms. It was possible at length to speak of Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians in a sense not very different from that in which those terms are used to-day. But while the

nations were slowly growing into distinctive and divergent units, they had not ceased to be members of one spiritual family. The Roman Church had taught all her sons to look on themselves as brothers in Christ, co-heirs of an eternal kingdom whose keys had been entrusted to her and to her alone. So thoroughly had she impressed this lesson upon them, and so great since the time of Charlemagne had become her political power, that when a combined effort on the part of the nations of Christendom was necessary to stem the torrent of Turkish invasion, she stood the one force in Europe with genius and authority sufficient to inspire them with a common purpose, and organise their energies in a common channel. The first call to arms was sounded in France by Peter the Hermit. A little later, in 1095, at a Council of the Church held at Clermont, Pope Urban himself pictured to a vast assembly the devastation of Palestine and the sacrilegious outrages of the infidel invader, and bade prince and peasant go forth to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. His eloquence kindled a flame of enthusiasm that in a short while brought multitudes from every Christian land to the standard of the Cross. Thus was originated

that long series of intermittent expeditions against the Seljukian Turks which succeeded in checking their further advance, and in establishing and maintaining in their midst, for about two hundred years, the little Latin kingdom of Jerusalem.

As was only natural, the armies of the Crusaders were shortly followed by hosts of pilgrims, recruited now from a wider field since the conversion to Christianity of the Scandinavians, Russians, and Hungarians. But from this time onwards many of the pilgrims in their visits to the Holy Land are prompted by other than merely pious motives. They move in a world different from that of their predecessors, a world that is at last beginning to stir from the long sleep of the Dark Ages. The new pilgrims are keen travellers, keen explorers, in some cases keen traders. There had always been a certain amount of commerce between India and the Levant. The Phœnicians had trafficked with the East by a way that ran up the Red Sea and thence overland to its terminus at Tyre. After Alexander's march into Asia, Alexandria was substituted for Tyre and two other routes were established. All three endured through the Roman occupation

of the Nearer East and through the Middle Ages. This gave (1) the southern route : up the Red Sea and overland across Egypt to Cairo and Alexandria ; (2) the middle route : up the Persian Gulf and then along the Euphrates to a point where the traffic was split into two portions, one going west to the Syrian coast, the other north, by the upper parts of the Tigris, to reach the Black Sea at Trebizond ; (3) the northern route : on camel-back from the waters of the Indus to those of the Oxus, thence to the Caspian, and from the Caspian overland either to the Black Sea or through Russia to the Baltic. While the Arabs swayed all the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, Europe was shut out from a great part of the direct commerce with the East. The products of Asia still flowed along the old channels, but through other hands. On the middle route Bagdad grew into a great trading centre, on the southern, Cairo. Only by the northern way was carried on a commerce free from the Mohammedan middleman. That was still open, and Persian and Armenian wares, too, were dispatched direct to Batoum at the south-east extremity of the Black Sea, while a quantity of silk from North-west China reached

the same waters by caravans which journeyed to the Oxus. The ultimate outlet was Constantinople, which till the time of the Crusades was the Christian centre of the Levant trade, and by the beginning of the twelfth century had become the richest city of the known world.

The principal effect of the Crusades was to throw open again the middle and southern routes through Syria and Egypt. Of the resulting increase of trade Venice secured the lion's share. So long as the Christians held Palestine she was supreme upon the middle route. The fall of Acre and final loss of Syria in 1291 checked her operations here, but she retrieved her position by making a commercial treaty with the Mamelukes of Egypt, and the traffic between the Red Sea and the Adriatic soon reached proportions that raised her to a state of unparalleled prosperity.¹ Meanwhile

¹ A large portion of the goods shipped to Venice was dispatched over the Brenner Pass to the valleys of the Inn, the Danube, the Main, and the Rhine. Some of it came round by sea in the Flanders fleet, which she sent out once a year, and which usually consisted of from three to five armed galleys. These vessels had regular ports of call, among them Southampton, Sandwich, and London. The principal distributing depot for the whole of the trade in the north of Europe was the city of Bruges.

Venice's great rival Genoa, by allying herself with the Greek emperors of Constantinople and occupying the Crimea, obtained undisputed possession of practically everything that came into Europe by the northern way. Commercial competition led to bitter hatred between the two republics. Their fleets of armed merchantmen never went to sea without a convoy; between their war galleys fights were incessant. It was this monopoly of the Eastern trade by Italian seamen that at any rate partly accounted for the subsequent determination of the Portuguese and Spaniards to discover a sea route that should lead them to the prize of the world, India and the treasure-house beyond.

The multiplication of trade and wealth, and the contact of thousands of passing Europeans with the inhabitants of Constantinople, heiress of the intellect of Greece, led to an increasing desire for knowledge not only of the nearer but of the remoter districts of Asia. What of those distant lands whence came the merchandise that proved so precious in the markets of the West—the silks and cottons; the dye-stuffs; the aromatic gums and woods; the drugs and narcotics; the ivory, gold and silver, pearls, rubies, diamonds, turquoises, and

sapphires; above all, the edible spices, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, nutmegs, cloves? Of India and the Islands next to nothing was known, and that almost entirely from hearsay. More abysmal still was the general ignorance of China. The Arabs had knocked at the door there; they had penetrated to Canton. But even they could tell, supposing they had been willing to do so, but little of that inscrutable country. North of China it was pure guess-work.

At the very moment when the curiosity of Europe was growing really keen, chance played into her hands and lifted awhile the curtain that for so long had shrouded those farthest regions. In the early years of the thirteenth century the great Tartar conqueror, Jenghis Khan, had built up in Central Asia an empire which under his immediate successors stretched west and east from mid-Russia to the Pacific, and north and south from the Arctic to the bottom of Cathay.¹ These Mongols were, as Marco Polo would say, idolaters. But they were not bigoted in their idolatry. On the

¹ The name by which China was at that time popularly known in Europe. Before the Tartar conquest the northern provinces had been governed by the dynasty of the Kitai.

contrary, they displayed a surprisingly tolerant attitude towards creeds other than their own. This may have been due to open-mindedness, or merely to cynical indifference. Western enthusiasts interpreted it in the former light. The Tartars, it was believed, were hovering on the brink of Christianity. In some brains wild dreams began to shape. If these barbarians could be brought within the fold, if, instead of menacing Europe with yet another heathen invasion, their savage energy could be harnessed to the service of Holy Church and turned against the Mohammedan, then at last perhaps the old enemy might be beaten down and the true faith rise to triumphant and universal acknowledgment.

Joannes de Plano Carpini, out of Umbria in Italy, was the first European explorer of note to enter the Mongol Empire. He was a friar of the Franciscan Order, a companion once of S. Francis of Assisi, whose doctrines he took a foremost part in spreading through Germany. This ecclesiastic Pope Innocent IV sent into Asia to the Tartars to protest against their invasion of Christian lands, to desire their peace and friendship, and to admonish them to embrace the faith without which they could

not be saved. Carpini was sixty-five years old and "a fat and heavy man," insomuch that in his preaching tours he had been granted special permission to ride a donkey—an unusual concession to a Franciscan friar. Yet he undertook without a murmur the task that had been laid upon him, and, accompanied by another of his Order, set out from Lyons on Easter Day, 1245. His fellow-traveller soon broke down and dropped out of the expedition, but at Breslau Carpini was joined by Benedict the Pole, appointed to act as interpreter. Their road lay past Kiev in Little Russia, across the Dnieper and the Don to the Volga (Carpini first gave the river the name). On the bank of this stood the camp of Batu, conqueror of Eastern Europe, a prince of the imperial blood and a very great man. The ambassadors of the Pope were ordered to pitch their tent a full league from his station, and were told that before they could be admitted to his court they must pass between two fires. This ordeal they surmounted without evil consequences, and they were presently received by the Tartar chief sitting on an elevated throne with one of his wives in a beautiful linen tent which had formerly belonged to the King of Hungary.

Batu carefully examined the letters they delivered him, and decided that they should proceed to the court of the Grand Khan. To Carpini the command must have read like a sentence of death. He obeyed it cheerfully. On Easter Day, 1246, exactly a year after the first start, their bodies swathed in tight bandages to brace them against fatigue, they set out on a ride of 3,000 miles, and this though they were "so ill that we could scarcely sit a horse ; and throughout all that Lent our food had been nought but millet with salt and water, and with only snow melted in a kettle for drink." For 106 days they rode, across the Ural river, north of the Caspian and Aral to the Jaxartes ("quidam magnus fluvius cujus nomen ignoramus"), till on July 22 they reached at length the seat of the Mongol Emperor, the great Yellow Pavilion that stood by the town of Karakorum. Here they were treated with kindness, and provided with a tent in which they spent a month before gaining the imperial presence.

There was a reason for the delay. The Christians had reached the capital at an interesting moment. The old Emperor was dead ; and his successor was about to be formally

elected and enthroned. Near a huge tent, roomy enough to hold 2,000 men, and surrounded by an enclosure of painted wooden boards, all the Tartar nobility were gathered. Every man's horse had a saddle and bridle enriched with jewels and massive ornaments of gold, a splendid sight as they galloped about over the valleys and hills. On the first day of the ceremonies all the nobles were clothed in white; on the second, in scarlet; on the third, in blue; on the fourth, in robes of figured cloth of Bagdad. The wooden enclosure had two gates: through one, only the Emperor could pass; at the other, guards shot down with arrows any who attempted to go beyond the limit assigned to them. Besides the nobles and an immense number of the common people, above 4,000 envoys were there from distant provinces and neighbouring states, some with tribute, others with presents of gems, embroidered stuffs, or horses richly caparisoned.

After some days the chieftains assembled in the tent to consult about electing an emperor, while the rest of the people outside fell to drinking incredible quantities of *koomis*, or mare's milk, the national beverage. Carpini and his companion, who never had any stomach

for this, contented themselves with ale. Soon afterwards a move was made to a plain some miles away, where, in another tent of the richest cloth supported on pillars plated with gold, Kuyuk, the new Grand Khan, was at length formally set on the imperial throne. All the strangers then brought their gifts and did homage to him. The two friars were asked what they had to offer, but they replied, truly enough, that they had nothing; their whole substance was already spent. A little later, however, they were summoned to deliver their message. In reply Kuyuk composed a letter to the Pope, which he caused to be written in Mongol and Arabic, and to be translated by the friars themselves into Latin. It consisted of a brief and haughty assertion that the Christians of Europe might regard the Grand Khan as the scourge of God—poor fruit for the seed Carpini and Benedict had so laboriously sown. They were then handed their passports; and with a gift from the Emperor's mother of a linen garment and a pelisse of foxes' skins with the hair turned outwards, they set their faces to the West. The homeward journey, undertaken in winter, was one of frightful hardships. Often they slept in the snow or on

ground cleared of snow with their feet. But at last, in June 1247, they reached Kiev, where the Christians welcomed them as men risen from the dead. They found the Pope at Lyons and gave him the letter. Not long afterwards Friar Joannes was rewarded with a Bishopric in Dalmatia. He died in the seventh year from his return.

Shortly after Carpini's death another mission was despatched to the Tartars. Of this, also, a Franciscan was head, William de Rubruquis, from a village near Brussels. He went as ambassador of Louis IX,¹ King of France, who was engaged in his crusade against the Turks in Syria, and wished to ally himself with a prince of the Mongols who was attacking the Mohammedans from the side of Persia. Rubruquis, like his predecessors, eventually reached Karakorum, where he found the Grand Khan, "a

¹ It was this king who was responsible for a pun from which the name Tartar originated. His mother, Queen Blanche, had a great dread of the Mongols. "This terrible irruption of the Tatars," she lamented one day to her son, "seems to threaten us with a total ruin, ourselves and our holy Church." "My mother," answered the prince, "let us look to Heaven for consolation. If these Tatars come, either we will make them return to the Tartarus whence they have issued forth, or we ourselves will go to find in heaven the happiness of the elect."—*Tartari imo Tartarei*.

flat-nosed man of middle stature, sitting on a couch covered with a shining spotted fur like seal-skin.' He had several interviews with the monarch, who seems not to have fully understood the object of the mission. After a while he was suffered to depart, and went back with a letter to the King of France.

For any diplomatic results that they achieved, the expeditions of Carpini and Rubruquis must be reckoned failures. Their importance lay in another direction. Both of the friars left written records of their journeys, and gave Europe its first reliable information about the geography and inhabitants of Central Asia. They were followed by a number of missionaries, sight-seers, and traders. The missionaries accomplished very little. Of the second class the most famous was an Englishman of S. Albans, Sir John Mandeville, whose book was for long widely read, principally because he was of all liars the most fantastic. The best, truest, and most comprehensive account of Asia was compiled by a Venetian trader.

Two noble Venetians, Maffeo and Nicolo Polo, were pioneers in the experiment of trading with the Tartars. In 1254, having purchased a stock of jewels, they crossed the Black Sea to the



MARCO POLO

Reproduced from the Frontispiece to the first German Edition of his "Travels," printed at Nuremberg in 1477

camp of Barkah, probably a son of Batu. Their enterprise was completely successful, but a war which had broken out between Barkah and his brother made the way by which they had come unsafe for their return. Accordingly, they proceeded eastwards, and presently reached the city of Bokhara in Turkestan. Here they met a Tartar nobleman who persuaded them to go with him to the court of the Grand Khan. The journey thither occupied twelve months, but its toils were repaid by the favourable reception with which the travellers met. The reigning sovereign, Kublaï Khan, grandson of old conquering Jenghis, was a man of large mind bent on improving the condition of his subjects. He was greatly struck with the polished bearing of the Venetians, and on learning that they were Christians dispatched them home with a message for the Pope, asking him to send him a hundred missionary teachers. It took them three years to get back to Venice, where Nicolo found his wife dead, and his son Marco growing up into a man.

Accompanied by this youth, Maffeo and Nicolo again set out in 1271. They took with them letters to Kublaï from the new Pope, but instead of the hundred missionaries, all they could obtain

was a couple of Dominican friars, and these at the last moment, through their terror of the "Tartareans," backed out of the expedition.¹ The route chosen lay through Persia and the sources of the Oxus. Here young Marco fell sick, and for a whole year they were delayed. Then proceeding, they passed through Khotan, and having crossed the Shamo Desert, came at length, after more than a thousand days from their setting out, into Kublai's presence at Kanbalu—that is to say, Pekin. The Grand Khan welcomed them with honour and was especially pleased with Marco, whom he made an officer of his household. Marco was an adaptable person, of great ability and address. He quickly learned to clothe and deport himself like a native of the country, and soon mastered the four most commonly employed languages of the empire. His influence became very great. The Emperor frequently sent him on State errands to the most distant of the provinces, made him a commissioner of the

¹ It is said that, when Kublai was disappointed of his missionaries, he sent envoys to the Grand Lama of Thibet, who was as prompt to seize an opportunity of gaining Tartar converts to Buddhism as the Pope had been slow in pushing the interests of the Catholic faith.

Privy Council, and at one time gave him the high post of governor of an important city in Southern China. The two elder Polos seem to have been highly esteemed for the advice they were able to give in matters of engineering. On one occasion in particular they were of great service to their master. A town in the province of Mangi had for a long time held out against the Tartars. On every side except one it was surrounded by water, and do what they might, they could neither take it by assault nor starve out the garrison. The Khan was deeply angered and disappointed. Just, however, when it seemed that the siege must be raised, Maffeo and Nicolo came to his assistance. Under their supervision huge catapults were constructed capable of throwing stones of 300 pounds weight. The walls of the city were battered down and it was forced to surrender.

After a residence of seventeen years in Kublai's dominions, the Polos began to think of going home. They were all three by this time very rich men. The two seniors were growing old ; their life was a life of magnificence enough, but they had no desire to lay their bones in Asia. Kublai was much hurt by the suggestion of their departure, and reproached

them with ingratitude. He offered to advance them to still further honours, he offered to treble their wealth, but he positively refused to part with them. A lucky circumstance, however, eventually enabled them to get away. Ambassadors had come from a prince of Persia, great-nephew of the Khan, to ask for a wife from among the latter's granddaughters. The request was granted, and the lady set out on her journey overland to Persia. But the country was in a disturbed state, and some months later the party returned to the capital. Just at this time Marco happened to be back from a voyage in the Indian islands, and gave a favourable report of the safe and easy passage to be found through those seas. The Persian envoys, when this came to their ears, approached the Khan and begged him not only to allow them to return by ship, but also to entrust them and their mistress to the charge of the Venetians, for whose nautical experience they had the greatest respect. In the end Kublaï consented. Fourteen vessels, some carrying a crew of 250 men, were fitted out and provisioned for two years, and after loading his three friends with rare jewels and other valuable gifts, and entreating them to come back to him

when they had visited their families in Europe, the old Emperor let them go.

In those days a sea voyage was a long and leisurely business. It took them eighteen months to reach Ormuz, at the bottom of the Persian Gulf, calling at the principal ports of the Indian islands on their way. When the expedition came into Persia, it was found that the prince was dead and the country seething with a civil war. The Venetians, their task accomplished, bade their companions farewell and pursued their way. It is not known what subsequently happened to the princess ; she probably found another husband. Passing through Trebizond and Constantinople, the two uncles and their nephew reached Venice in 1295, after an absence of twenty-four years.

They had some difficulty in obtaining recognition. Clad in the coarse garments of their travel (into every seam of which, however, were sewn rows of the most costly precious stones), walking with the air and speaking with the accent of the Tartars among whom they had lived for so many years, they found it hard to convince even their relatives that they were the persons they asserted themselves to be. They had long ago been given up for lost ; their very

houses were in strange hands. But when their identity was established the whole city flocked to visit them and congratulate them, and to view with amazement the riches they displayed.

Soon after their return a naval battle took place in the Adriatic between the fleets of Venice and Genoa. The Venetians were badly defeated, and Messer Marco, who commanded a galley, was carried off a prisoner by the victors. At Genoa the fame of his travels quickly spread abroad, and in his prison he dictated to a certain Rusticiano, of Pisa, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*. After four years he obtained his release, and returning to Venice, married in that city and lived quietly there till his death, in 1324.

No book of mediæval land travel should be mentioned in the same breath with that of Marco Polo. Other men followed him to the East; none added anything to the information he conveyed to Europe. His descriptions embrace not only Central and Eastern Asia, and especially China, with a mention of Japan, but also the islands of Java, Sumatra and Ceylon, the south-eastern peninsula, Burma and part of India. He gives in addition what he had

gathered from the Arabs about Zanzibar, Madagascar and Abyssinia, and speaks of the Russian territory of the Golden Horde, and the sledges and polar bears of Siberia in the Far North. Nor less remarkable than the range of the ground he covers is his discrimination of truth and his fidelity to it, an unusual phenomenon in a mediæval travel-writer. Geography owes more, perhaps, to him than to any discoverer before the great maritime developments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By a fortunate chance, too, his recording genius happened on the very age most favourable for bringing it to full flower. For about a hundred years from the date of his birth, the policy of the Tartar conquerors of Asia threw down the barriers that had hitherto shut out the West from the unknown East. Forty-four years after his death China turned out the Mongols, and from that time onward suffered no feet of strangers within her borders.

Of all the descriptions of peoples and places that Marco's book contains, the most interesting are those that depict the power and magnificence of the Grand Khan, and the greatness of the cities and rivers of Cathay and Mangi.¹

¹ Northern and Southern China.

“Kublāi, who is styled Grand Khan, or Lord of lords, is of the middle stature, neither tall nor short; his limbs are well formed, and in his whole figure there is a just proportion. His complexion is fair, and occasionally suffused with red like the bright tint of the rose, which adds much grace to his countenance. His eyes are black and handsome, his nose well shaped and prominent.”

During the months of December, January, and February the court resided at Kanbalu, in the north-east of Cathay. The Emperor, who seems always to have mistrusted the Chinese, had been informed by his astrologers that the city would rebel against his authority. Accordingly he had built another opposite to it on the south bank of the river, and to this he had caused all the Chinese inhabitants to remove. The new city was in form a perfect square, each side six miles¹ in length and containing three principal gates. It was laid out by line, the streets so straight that a person standing at one gate got a view of the corresponding one

¹ A Venetian mile was shorter than an English one. Sir John Mandeville speaks of “miles of Lombardy, which are also little miles. These are not miles of Gascony, or of Germany, where the miles are great miles.”

in the opposite wall. Outside the walls, made of earth very thick and solid, were the twelve suburbs, each three or four miles in extent, where the strangers and merchants lived. Kublaï's palace stood adjacent to the south side of the city, within a square enclosure the walls of which were eight miles long. Within this outer enclosure was a second, the space between being allotted as a station for the imperial troops, most of them cavalry. In the centre of the second square was a third, a mile either way. Here was situated the palace itself, approached by a flight of marble steps, and containing a vast hall and a multitude of chambers all built on a single floor. The ceiling of every apartment was covered with paintings and gilt, the walls ornamented with carved and gilded figures of dragons, birds and warriors. In eight large buildings was stored the Emperor's private property, his wardrobe, his gold and silver bullion, his pearls and precious stones.

Not far from the palace was an artificial mount of earth a hundred paces in height, and the circuit at the base a mile. "It is clothed with the most beautiful trees, for whenever his majesty receives information of a handsome

tree growing in any place he causes it to be dug up with all its roots and the earth about them, and however large and heavy it may be he has it transported to this mount by means of elephants and adds it to the verdant collection."

The Emperor had a passion for the chase. While at Kanbalu he gave frequent orders for the assembling of large hunting parties. The game was varied—wild boars, stags, roebuck, wild oxen and asses, and wolves, besides birds and lesser animals. Leopards, lynxes, and lions¹ were kept for the purpose of chasing the more savage of these, and Kublaï had falcons and eagles specially trained to stoop at wolves; "and such is their size and strength that none, however large, can escape from their talons."

In the spring and autumn months the Grand Khan occupied himself in travelling through his Chinese dominions. Many roads led from Kanbalu to the different provinces. On these were built post-houses at intervals of from twenty-five to thirty miles, at each of which four hundred good horses were kept in constant readiness for the use of messengers and ambassadors. Messages, however, were usually carried by foot-

¹ Probably tigers.

runners, who lived in cottages three miles apart on the roads. Every runner wore a girdle set with small jangling bells, which served to give warning of his approach, in order that the next might instantly relieve him on his arrival. In this way news was carried from district to district by night and day with the utmost rapidity.

The summer was spent in the land of Bargu, lying towards the North Ocean, from a mountain on whose shores the Emperor procured his favourite peregrine falcons.

South of Cathay lay the rich country of Mangi. This had been ruled by a prince called Fanfur, but in the year 1269 Kublaï determined to take it from him, and sent against him a large army of foot and horse under General Chin-San Ba-Yan. The king fled to "certain impregnable isles of the ocean,"¹ leaving the charge of his capital, Kinsai, to his queen. The latter had every confidence of being able to repel the invaders, since the astrologers had declared that her husband could never be deprived of his sovereignty by any other than a chief with a hundred eyes. But when she learnt, to her horror, that the Tartar general's

¹ Probably Japan.

name had this very meaning, she bowed to fate and surrendered the city. Kublaï received her at his court with honour and made her an allowance suitable to her rank.

Kinsai, the Celestial City, capital of Southern China, stood on the River Tsien-tang-Kiang at fifteen miles from the sea. "In the world there is not its like, for by common estimation it is one hundred miles in circuit, with a lake on one side and a river on the other divided into many channels, and upon these and the canals adjoining twelve thousand bridges of stone. There are ten market places, each half a mile square; great stone storehouses where the Indian merchants lay by their goods; palaces and gardens on the sides of the main street, which is paved with stone on each side, and in the middle full of gravel, with passages for the water, which keeps it always clean." The chief articles of trade were meat, game, salt, fruit, silk, trinkets, and cloth of gold. Paper money was used by everybody. This was manufactured from the inner rind of the mulberry-tree, was black in colour, and stamped in vermilion with the royal seal. The punishment for counterfeiting it was death. In many of the streets were cold baths, "where all the inhabitants

are in the daily practice of washing their persons, especially before meals. Warm water, however, is provided for the use of strangers, who, from not being habituated to the use of it, cannot bear the shock of the cold."

A large force of police and municipal officers carefully regulated the lives of the citizens and visitors. The hours of the day and night were sounded by watchmen stationed on the principal bridges, beating metal gongs with wooden mallets. After a certain time in the evening no light or fire might be kept burning. Lame or infirm persons who were unable to work were conveyed to hospitals, and when cured were obliged to follow a trade.

Marco speaks with great admiration of the rivers of China and the amount of commerce carried by them. The largest river in the world, he says, is the Kiang, its width being in some places ten, in others eight, in others six miles. "Its length, to the place where it discharges itself into the sea, is upwards of one hundred days' journey. A great number of cities and large towns are situated upon its banks, and more than two hundred, with sixteen provinces, partake of the advantages of its navigation: On one occasion, when Marco Polo" (he always

refers to himself thus in the third person) “was at the city of Sin-giu, he saw there no fewer than fifteen thousand vessels. All these are covered with a kind of deck and have a mast with one sail. Their burden is, in general, about four thousand quintals¹ of Venice.” The ropes were formed of split canes twisted together in lengths of fifteen paces. By these cables the vessels were towed along the rivers by teams of ten or twelve horses.

The island of Zipangu² was situated at some distance from the coast of Mangi. “It is of considerable size; its inhabitants have fair complexions, are well made, and are civilised in their manners. The religion is the worship of idols. They are independent of every foreign power. They have gold in the greatest abundance, but as the king does not allow of its being exported few merchants visit the country.” So rich was the sovereign of Zipangu that the entire roof of his palace was plated with gold, “in the same manner as we cover our churches with lead.” It was no doubt the report of its riches that induced Kublaï to send a fleet to attack the island. The expedition met with complete failure. Some years later

¹ Above 200 tons,

² Japan.

the Grand Khan learnt that things had miscarried partly, at any rate, in consequence of a quarrel between two of his commanders. He caused the hand of the one to be cut off ; the other was wrapped in the fresh hide of a buffalo, sewn tight. As the skin dried it contracted, and “ compressed the body to such a degree that the sufferer was incapable of moving or in any way helping himself, and thus miserably perished.”¹

In this sea of China, over against Mangi, Marco heard from pilots and mariners that there were 7,440 islands, most of them inhabited. “ It is said of the trees which grow in them that there is none that does not yield a fragrant smell. They produce many spices and drugs, particularly bigrum-aloes and pepper in great abundance, both white and black. It is impossible to estimate the value of the gold and silver articles found in these islands.” The

¹ Not the only novel method of execution mentioned in the book. On another occasion a rebellious relative of the Grand Khan's was put to death in the following fashion: “ He was enclosed between two carpets, which were violently shaken until the spirit had departed from the body, the reason for this peculiar sentence being that the sun and the air should not witness the shedding of the blood of one who belonged to the imperial family.”

great Chinese port for the Indian trade was Zaitun.¹

On his way home the traveller took careful note of all the islands and countries he passed. Among others he mentions Lesser Java,² divided into eight kingdoms, where he saw the rhinoceros, to which he gave the name of unicorn, and whence he was the first European to bring sago into Europe. In the Bay of Bengal he found, in certain islands,³ “a most brutish and savage race of idolaters, having heads, eyes and teeth resembling those of the canine species; and every person, not being of their own nation, whom they can lay their hands upon they kill and eat.” He gives an account of the pearl fishery of Ceylon, and repeats the story of the great ruby in the possession of the king there. It was reported, he says, to be a span long and the thickness of a man’s arm, brilliant beyond description and without a single flaw. It had the appearance of a glowing fire. For this ruby Kublaï had offered the value of a city, but the King of Ceylon had replied that “he would not sell it for all the treasure of the universe.” From Ceylon the peninsula of India was reached, but Marco’s

¹ Probably Canton.

² Sumatra.

³ The Andamans.

knowledge of that country does not seem to have reached far beyond the coasts. He mentions the Brahmins, without whose assistance it was useless to fish for pearls, since "they alone had the power to control the monsters of the deep." The description of India is followed by that of the chief cities of Persia and Arabia, as well as of a part of Eastern Africa, where the island of Madagascar was frequented by the Rokh, a bird which the Arabs related was able to carry off an elephant in its claws. For the truth of this story Marco does not vouch; he did not visit the African coast himself.

At the end of his book he speaks from hearsay, but quite accurately, of the regions of Northern Asia. They abounded, he says, in valuable furs, but the country consisted of endless marshes, snow-bound and frozen for the greater part of the year. The natives used sledges drawn by dogs, and in the long winter, through which the sun never appeared, the Tartars invaded them and carried off their furs. "In these northern districts are found bears of a white colour and of a prodigious size, being for the most part about twenty spans in length."

CHAPTER III

THE HEEL OF AFRICA

DESPITE the fear with which the Atlantic was universally regarded by the men of the Middle Ages, there had been from antiquity legends of lands within the Western Ocean. Before the Christian Era, Plato had affirmed the existence of a large island across the sea to the west of Spain, and had made this Atlantis the home of a Utopian republic whose citizens were free from the vices of the civilised world as he knew it. In a later day Brendan, an Irish Saint, was the hero of a legendary voyage into the Atlantic about A.D. 570. After many wanderings through mediæval maps, S. Brendan's Isle found a geographical retreat in the West Indies, and was not finally explained as an effect of mirage till the eighteenth century. Then there was Antilia, Island of the Seven Cities, which Portuguese tradition said had been colonised by seven Christian Bishops whom the Arab conquest

had driven from Spain. To the geographer of the Middle Ages they were all cloud lands, like most of the regions of the world outside the Mediterranean. With the discovery of Madeira, the Canaries and the Azores, each was either identified with some island of those groups, or drifted farther and farther west across the map till it was crowded out of an imaginary existence by the realities of the New World. There must, however, have been some foundation for the old, persistent idea of an earthly paradise across the Western wave. It seems to point to the fact of discoveries never definitely recorded and more than half forgotten, yet leaving the shadow of a memory round which time had woven fantastic stories of its own.

Tradition did not stop at the discovery of Atlantic islands; it circumnavigated Africa. We hear that about 600 B.C., when Pharaoh Necho of Egypt had finished his canal from the Nile to the Arabian Gulf, he sent some Phœnicians out from it, ordering them to return to Egypt by the Pillars of Hercules and the Mediterranean. They set forth, and when autumn came landed on the part of Libya nearest to them, sowed some corn, waited (the time would not be long) till it was ripe, reaped it and con-

tinued the voyage. In this manner they proceeded for two years, and in the third passed through the Strait into the Mediterranean and so reached Egypt again. Herodotus, writing of the voyage two hundred years later, found only one improbability in it. The mariners had said that while sailing round Libya they had the sun on their right hand ; “ which to me,” remarks the Greek historian, “ does not appear credible, however it may seem to others.” To the modern reader it furnishes the strongest argument in support of the truth of an otherwise doubtful tale.

The next recorded attempt on the unknown coasts of the Dark Continent was that of the Carthaginian admiral Hanno. This is almost certainly historical. At some date in the sixth century B.C. Hanno went, with sixty fifty-oared ships, to explore and colonise outside the Strait of Gibraltar. He succeeded in establishing seven trading-stations in Mauretania, one of which, at the mouth of the Rio d'Ouro, lasted for a long time. Proceeding south, he found rivers alive with crocodiles and hippopotami, and shores where in the day-time all was calm ; but at night the mountains seemed to be on fire, and the explorers heard screams and

shouts and the sound of flutes, drums and cymbals. Presently they reached a bay within which was an island, and in the island a lake, and in the lake another island peopled by savage beings covered with hair whom the interpreters called Gorillæ. The males made off, casting stones as they fled, but three females were captured. These, however, bit and scratched so furiously that they had to be killed, and their skins were stuffed and taken to Carthage. This spot, which may have been in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, marked the southern limit of the expedition. The voyagers were forced to return home through lack of provisions.

It was not till long after this that discovery began again in the Atlantic. During the fourteenth century Genoese explorers reached the Canaries, the Fortunate Isles of the Greeks, and saw Teneriffe, whose height they estimated at 30,000 feet. But they were so alarmed at the signs of enchantment which they observed that they did not venture to attempt a settlement, but returned in haste to the port of Spain whence they had sailed. In the reign of King Edward III, Robert Macham, an Englishman, accidentally discovered the island afterwards known as

Madeira. He had run away with a lady of Bristol named Anne Darfet, and to escape the anger of her relatives, the pair, accompanied by several of their friends, got into a ship and sailed to find some haven of security across the ocean. After a time a storm drove them to an island. Here they landed to rest, but no sooner were they ashore than their vessel was put to sea by those left on board of her, and thus they found themselves deserted. Anne soon succumbed to privation and exhaustion, and five days later Macham was found dead upon her grave. The others buried him beside her, set up a cross above the lovers, and built a canoe in which they managed to make the coast of Morocco. The Moors enslaved them, but finally they were ransomed and got to Spain. In this way the story subsequently came to the ears of Prince Henry the Navigator, who sent out an expedition to the scene of the tragedy. In 1402 the Canaries were reached by a Norman baron named Jean de Béthencourt, but neither he nor his successors could win the whole of the islands, and they afterwards sold their rights in them to Portugal in return for an estate in Madeira.

From this point the story of the exploration

of the western shores of Africa ceases to deal with the spasmodic discoveries of isolated adventurers, and centres in the organised and sustained efforts of the Portuguese to push their way by sea to the markets of the East. In the race for the Indies by an ocean route, several causes gave Portugal a start over other possible competitors. For a very long time the great trade of the Arabians had poured into Spain the coveted productions of Asia, and of these the Christians had had their full share. But as the Moors gradually lost their hold on the peninsula and were driven farther and farther south, and as relations between the two races grew constantly more embittered, the supply of the luxuries to which the Christians had become accustomed fell shorter and shorter of the demand for them. Portugal was the first of the peninsular States to expel the Arabs completely from her territory, and consequently the first to feel the pinch and to consider the possibility of independent access to the Eastern trade. She had no hope of market expansion except by sea; Castile and Aragon, often hostile, blocked inland intercourse with other European countries. On the other hand, she possessed distinct geographical advantages for

Atlantic maritime development. She was the south-westernmost free nation of Europe ; her littoral was long, with fine harbours, and rivers flowing westwards to the ocean ; and a large proportion of her population consisted of trained and adventurous seamen. At the beginning of the fifteenth century most of the maritime states had begun to benefit from the improvements in the art of ship-building which had resulted from the commercial activities of Venice and Genoa and the struggle between those two Powers for the commercial supremacy of the Mediterranean. Navigation, again, was no longer the haphazard business it had been throughout the Middle Ages. Not only in the Mediterranean Sea, but in the Indian Ocean too, sailors now had the assistance of compass, astrolabe, and time-piece ; and the accurate *portulani*, or sea charts, gave them, at any rate as far as the coasts were concerned, a far more reliable guide than the vague maps of the theoretical geographers. But perhaps Portugal's greatest asset lay in the happy fact that at this turning-point in her destiny she produced a prince whose genius guided her energies into the one path of expansion open to her, and whose enduring patience and resolve held her,



PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR

till the initial difficulties were overcome, to the task he had set before her.

Henry the Navigator was born in 1394, fourth of five sons of King John I. His mother was Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt. In his twenty-first year he accompanied his father and brothers against the Moors of Morocco, and played such a prominent part in the capture of Ceuta that on his return to Portugal, in 1418, his military services were sought by several of the monarchs of Europe. But his intercourse with the Moors had fired him with an idea and a purpose that outweighed any prospect of military glory. They had told him of the gold that went by caravan from the Guinea Coast to Timbuctoo, and thence by the oases of the Sahara to the North African city of Tunis. Other information too they gave him, but this was the kernel of the matter. He seems to have realised at once the opportunity that lay — to Portugal's hand. If there was gold to be got in Guinea, she could reach it by sea as easily as the Moors by land, and every ounce of it that found its way to Lisbon would help in the great crusade against the enemies of Christendom that lay at the back of Henry's every thought and action. For always he had a double aim

—to advance the greatness of his country, and to employ her extended power as a weapon wherewith to smite the infidel and win converts to the true faith. As he pondered the scheme it took on larger possibilities. His outpost beyond the Gambia established, he would sail up the “Western Nile,” supposed to issue from a lake near the source of the great river of Egypt. Then, joining hands with Prester John, King-Priest of Abyssinia, he would take the Mohammedans in rear and recover the whole of North Africa for Christianity. Whether his schemes went beyond this is uncertain. Probably the idea of circumnavigating Africa did not take definite shape till a short time after his death. But in the meanwhile his labours of forty years had resulted in the overcoming of the harder obstacles of the long route, and in the establishment of a tradition of ocean seamanship which in the next generation was to carry the Portuguese sailors to their final goal.

On the Prince’s return from Ceuta, his father made him governor of the old kingdom of Algarve, in the south of Portugal, and he established himself at a spot near Lagos where the lonely headland of Sagres thrust itself out into the Atlantic. Here he built an observatory,

and set up a school for the study of the sciences of mathematics and astronomy and the arts of map-making and navigation. His own industry was so great that from being a learner he soon became himself a teacher, and ranked high among the experts whom he gathered round him. His private income was a large one, and as Grand Master of the Order of Christ he was able to devote a part of the revenues of that organisation to the purposes of a work which he regarded primarily in the light of a crusade. Thus he had ample funds at his disposal, and this was a fortunate circumstance, for it enabled him to tide over the long period that elapsed before his exploring expeditions began to repay the expense which they involved.

Even before his settlement at Sagres, Prince Henry had begun to push forward the work of actual discovery. The year 1418 brought the first results. Two gentlemen of his household, John Zarco and Tristam Vaz, had gone out for the Guinea Coast. Sailing along by the land, as the custom was, they were driven to sea by a gale and gave themselves up for lost. In the night, however, the wind and the storm ceased, and at dawn they found themselves near a little island. This, in their joy at their escape,

they named Porto Santo, and then they put back to Portugal with the news of what they had found. Henry sent them out again with three ships, the third commanded by a nobleman named Don Perestrello. They took with them everything necessary for colonising the island. Unfortunately their cargo included some live rabbits, which when turned out bred with such rapidity that in a couple of years they had devoured the vegetation to an extent which necessitated the abandonment of the first settlement. As soon as the colonists were established, Perestrello returned to Portugal, while Zarco and Vaz remained on the island. From time to time they noticed a dark blur on the horizon, constant in position. Finally Zarco sailed towards it and discovered a larger island, to which, because of the dense woods that clothed its hills, he gave the name of Madeira. He had already heard the story of Macham, and, sure enough, it was not long before he came on the graves, and the cross above them, where the adventurer and his mistress lay. After examining the coasts and sending a party to explore the interior, Zarco returned to Prince Henry, who made him commander of the island. This led to the establishment of a permanent colony

there, which soon exported large quantities of timber to Portugal. A curious circumstance, however, checked its prosperity for awhile. Zarco, clearing a space to build a town, set fire to some of the woods near the coast. The flames spread through the forest and were not extinguished for seven years.

The discovery of West African islands, however, was beside the Prince's main purpose. Indeed, to some extent it proved a hindrance to his schemes, for over and over again the captains whom he sent forth in his caravels, with orders to push on down the coast, turned aside to the Canaries, and contented themselves with bringing back a few of the captured natives to be sold as slaves in the Lagos market. The chief obstacle that lay in the southward path was Cape Bojador. That formidable promontory was reported to stretch out for one hundred miles into the Sea of Darkness, its approach beset by fast-running tides and innumerable shoals. Nor were these the only sources of fear. Through the tropical seas, it was said, no ship could pass. There the furnace heat of the sun poured down in sheets of flame; uncouth monsters ranged the burning shores or swam beneath the boiling waves; Satan himself

reached out his hand from the deep to snatch helpless sailors and drag them to the bottom of the ocean; and if ever a mariner came home alive from such a voyage, his escape from death would profit him very little, since Heaven, to punish his curiosity, would most certainly have changed him into a black man. But at last the cape was rounded. A captain named Gil Eannes¹ was the first to accomplish the feat. In 1434, taking his courage in both hands, he sailed far out into the ocean, doubled Cape Bojador, and returned to report that the seas beyond were as easy of navigation as waters nearer home. Next year, accompanied by Henry's cup-bearer, he went again with two vessels and explored the coast for a hundred and fifty miles past the old stumbling-block.

This broke the back of the difficulty, but the troubled state of Portuguese internal politics now for a time engrossed the Prince's attention and prevented his pressing forward with his discoveries. During the next six years a few voyages were undertaken, but they accomplished very little. In 1441, however, Antam

¹ There is perhaps a more romantic atmosphere about the Portuguese name than can be found in its English equivalent, Giles Jones.

Gonsalvez went out. This captain, who was a very young man, set nine of his crew ashore some distance south of Cape Bojador. After a time they came upon a Moor, stark naked, carrying two spears in his hands, and driving a camel before him. As the party approached he brandished his weapons and made terrible faces to frighten them, but on being struck with a dart he cast down his spears and was easily taken. A little later they made a prisoner of a Negress. These were the first captives secured on the mainland. Gonsalvez was now joined by Nuno Tristam, and the two between them managed to seize about ten more Moors. After this Gonsalvez returned to Portugal, but Tristam persevered till he reached a lofty cape which, from the whiteness of the sands at its foot, he named Cape Blanco. Some of the captured Moors proved to be persons of rank and wealth, and promised a substantial ransom if they might be sent back to their own country. Accordingly Gonsalvez sailed in the following year with instructions to land them on the spot where they had been found. This he did, and their ransom was paid in gold dust and Negro slaves; it included also a number of ostrich eggs, some of which subsequently

appeared upon Henry's breakfast table at Sagres. From their first receiving gold dust here, the Portuguese called the arm of the sea in which they anchored the Rio d'Ouro.

Henry recognised at once the importance of this last achievement. The Negroes and gold dust brought home served to stimulate the spirit of adventure among those who had come to look askance on his hitherto unremunerative voyages. Here at last was tangible evidence that there was profit to be gained. From his Moorish prisoners, too, he had learnt that he was approaching the starting-point of the caravans that traversed the desert tracts south of the Sahara, carrying pepper, slaves and gold to the cities of North Africa. Nuno Tristam shortly afterwards sailed seventy-five miles beyond Cape Blanco to a small island in the Bight of Arguin, where the Portuguese were able to commence a trade with the Negro States of the Senegal and the Gambia. They had now passed those barren coasts where the Western Sahara reaches to the very edge of the continent, and were nearing the fertile and populous countries of the Blacks. Five years later the Prince built a fort in the Bay of Arguin, which soon became the centre of a thriving commerce.

Yet curiously enough, though from this time expeditions were equipped in constantly increasing numbers, the work of discovery continued to make only slow progress. The Portuguese caravels went out not to extend the limits of geographical knowledge, but to bring back cargoes of slaves for sale in the markets of Lagos and Lisbon. Only here and there was a captain found who had other than purely mercenary motives. One of the most enterprising of these in 1445 passed the mouth of the Senegal and came to a headland clothed with grass and trees which he named Cape Verde. The Senegal he took for the "Western Nile." It had long been believed that that river had a westerly as well as a northern course, and that from its Atlantic mouth a man might sail to its very source, to those Mountains of the Moon where Prester John reigned and never died. Next year another navigator reached Sierra Leone, and nearly lost his life from a poisoned dart which struck him in the foot. It was the same story all along the coast. The Portuguese were regarded as robbers, marauders, kidnappers, and wherever they landed the Negroes either fought or fled. Every voyage was a desperate business. But

after a time the seekers for "black ivory" resorted to an easier method of securing their wares. An arrangement was made with the wandering Moors who frequented the shores opposite the island in the Bight of Arguin. These Arabs had long been accustomed to give horses to the Negro chiefs in exchange for slaves, receiving from ten to eighteen for each horse according to its quality. The slaves were then taken across the desert to be sold in Tunis and other towns of Barbary. Now, however, a number began to be brought to Arguin, where the Portuguese traders purchased seven or eight hundred of them every year for the Lisbon market. After the advance to Sierra Leone, no progress in discovery was made for eleven years. It is worth noting, however, that at about this period the Crown of Portugal obtained from the Pope a grant of all lands or islands which had been, or might be, discovered between Cape Bojador and the East Indies, and at the same time a plenary indulgence for the souls of all who might perish in the task of winning heathen converts to Christianity.

Meanwhile the Azores had been reached. Prince Henry had long known of their existence ; they were laid down, perhaps rather vaguely,

in a chart given to his brother, Don Pedro, as early as 1428. Possibly the Carthaginians had visited them; at any rate, Carthaginian coins were afterwards found in Corvo, which with Flores forms the most westerly of the three groups into which the islands are divided. In 1431 Gonzalo Cabral, sailing under the auspices of the Prince, came to the Formigas and soon afterwards to S. Mary. No important discovery was then made for some time, but between 1444 and Henry's death the rest of the islands were visited and colonised. Fayal was afterwards presented by the King of Portugal to his sister Isabel, Duchess of Burgundy, and from the resulting influx of Flemish settlers the Azores were for some time known as the Flemish Islands.

Of all Henry's expeditions, the most interesting were those commanded by the Venetian, Aloisio de Cadamosto, in the years 1455 and 1456. He coasted the Gulf of Guinea for some distance beyond Cape Verde, and afterwards published an account of his experiences which was very widely read.

In his first voyage Cadamosto visited the colonies of Madeira and the Canaries, of the former of which he gives a favourable report.

The soil, he says, yielded seventy for one, and the vineyards and sugar plantations there were flourishing exceedingly. Very wonderful was the agility of the native Canarians, who resembled goats in the way in which they leapt from rock to rock of their mountain precipices. Nor could any man throw stones as they could; they never failed to hit the mark, and their missiles flew almost with the force of a musket ball. From the Canaries he sailed to Cape Blanco, and thence to the mouth of the Senegal, which divided "the kingdom of the Tawny Moors from the First Kingdom of the Negroes." The Moors he describes as "a filthy race, liars and traitorous knaves." They had a habit of folding a handkerchief round their heads in such a manner as to hide their mouths and noses, since they thought it improper to let their mouths be seen except when eating—a curious trait in a people who seem in many respects to have been devoid of decency. When they first saw the Portuguese ships they took them for large white-winged birds, but when the vessels furled their sails and came to anchor, they changed their minds and said they were great fishes.

Cadamosto made his way some distance up

the Senegal and arrived at the territory of a black chief called Budomel, who entertained him hospitably for four weeks. This prince was already a purchaser of European goods from the Portuguese, but the majority of his subjects had never seen a white man. They crowded round the visitors, spat on Cadamosto's arm, and tried to rub off the "white paint," since it was past belief that the natural colour of human flesh should be anything but black or brown. Budomel had a bodyguard of two hundred men, and several wives, each dwelling in a village of her own. On the hospitality of these ladies he and his retainers lived, making continual progresses from one kraal to another. The court ate all its meals sitting on the ground, quite without ceremony.

After doing some trade with King Budomel the Portuguese left the Senegal, doubled Cape Verde, and proceeded southwards along the coast. "The land," says Cadamosto, "is here all low, and full of fine large trees which are continually green, as the new leaves are grown before the old ones fall off, and they never wither like the trees in Europe; they grow so near the shore that they seem to drink, as it were, the water of the sea. The coast is well

watered everywhere by small rivers, which are useless for trade, however, as they do not admit vessels of any size." At the mouth of the Gambia they tried to land again, but the natives proved so hostile that they thought better of it and returned, with what spoils they had got, to Portugal. Cadamosto noticed that at the farthest point he reached on this voyage the Pole Star had sunk so low as to be barely visible. By way of compensation he got a sight of those six splendid stars that form the Southern Cross.

Next year he sailed a second time, and being driven out to sea near Cape Blanco, came in three days upon some islands, hitherto undiscovered, which he named the Cape Verde Islands. He made only a brief stay here and went on to the Gambia river, where the natives now met him much more peaceably. But the supply of slaves and gold proved far less than the Portuguese had expected, and they soon put out again. Finally they reached an arm of the sea nearly twenty miles across—the Rio Grand, they christened it—some fifteen leagues beyond the Gambia. This was their farthest point. They had all but suffered shipwreck and the crew were falling sick. There was

nothing for it but to go home. Cadamosto and his men did not make their fortunes, but they added a good deal to existing knowledge of the coast lands and coast peoples about the heel of Africa.

This voyage was nearly the last undertaken under the direct patronage of Prince Henry. From 1458 to 1460 he was engaged in directing the armies of his nephew King Alfonso in a campaign against the Moors of Morocco. In the latter year he returned to Sagres and died there, sixty-six years old. During his lifetime about 1,500 miles of the African coast-line had been discovered.

CHAPTER IV

ROUND THE CAPE TO INDIA

AFTER Prince Henry's death, exploration languished for a time. This was mainly due to the attitude of the court. Alfonso V was too busy quarrelling with his neighbour of Castile to have leisure to plan or means to furnish seafaring expeditions into the unknown south. In 1469, however, private enterprise re-awoke. Fernando Gomez, whose Christian name survives in that of the island of Fernando Po, undertook to pay the King an annual rent of five hundred ducats for the monopoly of the Guinea trade, and to discover one hundred fresh leagues of shore during each of the five years of his lease. This brought the Portuguese within a league and a half of the Equator. Soon they had passed the bights of Benin and Biafra. Then came a moment of despair. The coast-line, instead of leading the explorers straight eastwards, as they hoped, to India, bent again inexorably to

the south, to set farther off than ever the goal they sought. But the disappointment brought no faltering. Despite the lukewarm encouragement of their sovereign, by 1481, the year of his death, Portuguese sailors had landed on the northern boundary of the kingdom of the Congo.

The new King, John II, had as Infante drawn a large portion of his revenue from the profits of the Guinea trade, and on his accession to the throne gave instant support to the maritime enterprise of his subjects. The first thing that was done was to build a fortress and church at the port of Mina. Fort S. George, as it was called, served as an entrepôt for the produce of the Guinea Coast and a sea base for further discoveries. John added to his titles that of Lord of Guinea, and asked the Pope to confirm to him the grants which had been made in the lifetime of Prince Henry. Gladly acceding to the request, the Pontiff issued a strict prohibition against any intrusion by other Powers within the undiscovered regions bestowed by His Holiness upon the Portuguese.¹ From this

¹ Mark here the universal submission in mediæval times to the extravagant decrees of the Bishop of Rome. After securing this grant, the Portuguese heard that some Englishmen were contemplating a voyage to Guinea. An embassy

period the explorers took to marking their discoveries with stone crosses in place of the wooden ones so far used. Each was six feet high and was carved with the arms of Portugal, the names of the reigning Sovereign and the navigator, and the date.

In 1484 Diego Cam reached the mouth of the Congo river. The natives received him in very friendly fashion, and he sent back some of them on a visit to Portugal. There they were treated with the greatest consideration by the King and Queen, who on the Negroes' conversion to Christianity became godparents of the chief man of the party.

Two years later a squadron of two fifty-ton caravels and a small store-ship was fitted out for another voyage of discovery and placed under the command of Bartholomew Diaz, a knight of the royal household. It sailed in

was immediately dispatched to the King of England to explain to him the exact nature and extent of the Papal concession, and to request him kindly to restrain his subjects from encroaching upon West African waters. He at once acknowledged the validity of the grant and complied with the ambassadors' demand. Evidently England would have to break away from Rome before she could make any sort of a start with her colonial empire.

the last week of August 1486. Diaz pursued the tactics of his predecessors till he reached a point 360 miles beyond their farthest discoveries. Here he set up one of the regulation stone crosses, and then decided to abandon the coastal route. He was long from port, 6,000 miles from home. His little ships, designed only for inshore work, were readier for the dockyard than for a fresh voyage of indefinite duration across an uncharted ocean. The quantity of water and provisions he could carry was limited, and if he parted company with the victualler his crews might starve before they made another harbour. Sickness, especially scurvy, was pretty sure to break out. Not one man in three could count on ever seeing the Congo, let alone Portugal, again. Diaz knew the risks, knew them all, took them all, and with a bold heart steered due south into the open sea.

For a time all went well. Then they met with heavy gales that drove them to the east. Soon the store-ship disappeared, and as day after day brought no sign of land the men began to despair. At length, however, after a turn to the north, the line of the coast was descried, and Diaz with his two vessels brought

up at an inlet which he named Shepherds' Bay, from the flocks of sheep which he saw the natives tending on the shore. Though he little guessed it, he was now 120 miles to the east of the Cape. Leaving this bay, he went on along the coast, touching at more than one point, and trying to enter into communication with the inhabitants by sending ashore Negroes whom he had brought with him from Portugal. But the savages proved so timid that he could make nothing of them. Presently his crews insisted on returning. Their food was nearly run out, and the contrary current made progress difficult ; in short, they were sick of the voyage. Finally, as the trend of the coast was now definitely north-east, Diaz consented to return. Accordingly, after reaching the mouth of the Great Fish river, they put back. In a few days disappointment gave place to exultation. As they were returning they suddenly came in sight of what could only be the very headland which had for so long been the object of such eager search. They had passed the southern point of Africa. To complete their satisfaction, they fell in directly afterwards with the missing store-ship. She had only four of her crew

left ; the remainder had been massacred by the savages of the coast. Diaz christened the promontory Cabo Tormentoso, the Stormy Cape, and hastened home with the news of his discovery. But in the ear of King John the name had an ugly ring likely to deter mariners fainter-spirited than his resolute captain. He changed it to the Cape of Good ~~Cape~~ ^{Hope} ; and so it has been called ever since. The voyage of Diaz had occupied sixteen months, and had resulted in the addition of about a thousand miles to the discovered coasts of Africa.

Everything now seemed to point to the speedy completion of the task of the Portuguese navigators, but it was not till twelve years after the voyage of Diaz that they eventually reached India, and perhaps the interval would have been longer still had not Columbus's westward ventures from 1492 onwards threatened, as everybody believed, to snatch for Spain the prize that Portugal already regarded as her own. At length, under the patronage of a new king, Manoel the Fortunate, a young seaman named Vasco da Gama was put in command of three vessels with a total complement of about sixty men, and sent out to the

East.¹ Weighing from Lisbon on July 8, 1497, he sailed straight to the Cape Verde Islands, and left Santiago, the southernmost of that group, on August 3. Then, standing out to sea, he next sighted land in the beginning of November, and having doubled the Cape, came into Mossel Bay on the 22nd of that month. The middle of December brought him to the Great Fish river. Progress was now slow for awhile owing to the contrary Agulhas current, and it was not till Christmas Day that he reached the anchorage to which he gave the appropriate name of Port Natal. On March 2, 1498, he brought up in the roadstead of Mozambique.

¹ Some time before da Gama's departure the Portuguese Government had dispatched two agents overland by way of Egypt to get into touch with Prester John of Abyssinia and gather what information they could about the route from East Africa to India. One of these men was murdered at Cairo. The other, named Covilham, after actually visiting the Malabar Coast, proceeded to Abyssinia, where he was warmly welcomed by the king of that country, who fell a good deal short of the heroic figure painted by mediæval mythmongers. The monarch, indeed, took such a fancy to Covilham that he never let the poor man go again. He supplied him with a wife, raised him to the highest offices in the State, and kept him as an ornament of his court for over thirty years. But the prisoner was able to send letters to Portugal which proved of the greatest assistance to his countrymen when they at length made the effort which finally carried them to India.

In Mozambique, da Gama found Mohammedans who spoke the Arabic language, and with these he was able, through his interpreters, to communicate. Henceforth it was plain sailing, since the Moors were constantly traversing the ocean route from those parts to India. Da Gama, though the Moslems resented his appearance in a sea whose navigation they regarded as their own monopoly, was able to secure the services of a pilot first to Malindi, and thence straight over to Calicut, on the Malabar Coast, where he dropped anchor outside the harbour on May 20. The voyage from Lisbon to India had occupied ten months and twelve days, and was a far greater feat of seamanship than any hitherto accomplished. In point both of distance and of difficulty, Columbus's fair-weather sail of thirty-six days across the 2,600 miles that separated the Canaries and the Bahamas was a comparatively simple achievement.

At the end of the fifteenth century the whole sea-borne trade of the East, from Egypt to Japan, was in the hands of Mohammedans, most of them of Asiatic, but many of European descent. Calicut was the chief Arab trading centre. Fifteen hundred vessels of various

nationalities cleared there in a season. It was the great emporium for the cinnamon and pearls of Ceylon, and the ginger, pepper, and other products of the Malabar district. To it came also every summer a large fleet of Chinese junks freighted with wares from more distant shores. They were immense, unwieldy things, mainly propelled by long sweeps, but having also masts with sails of stiff matted reeds, never lowered even in harbour. Vegetable gardens were cultivated aboard the largest of them, and each of the vessels was said to accommodate over a thousand persons, and was accompanied by two or three smaller craft for the purpose of loading and unloading cargo. A large quantity of the merchandise found its way to the Mediterranean by the Red Sea and Persian Gulf routes, but when it reached the European consumer it had changed hands so often and paid duty at so many ports that it finally sold for five times its original price. The Sultan of Egypt, for instance, levied tolls on it amounting to £290,000 a year.

Beyond Calicut, however, there was a second mart of growing importance to which the Moors of Africa and Arabia were beginning to sail direct for the produce of the Farther East.

This was Malacca. Here the rarest commodities in the world could be purchased at a cheaper rate from resident Arab traders than from the merchants of Calicut, who had had to pay for the cost of their conveyance to that port in the Chinese fleet. To Malacca were brought the spices, drugs, dyes, and perfumes that civilised men coveted so dearly—opium from the Peninsula, mace and nutmeg from Amboyna, sandalwood from Timor, camphor from Borneo, and from two small islands in the Moluccas that most precious thing of all, the clove.

When da Gama arrived he sent messengers to ask permission from the Zamorin, the native prince, to trade; and the first negotiations were so successful that no demur was made to his entering the port. The Portuguese commander then announced his intention of going ashore to interview the Zamorin. His officers tried to dissuade him. The Mohammedans, they knew, were already busy intriguing with the Indian ruler against them. There was more than a suspicion of treachery afoot. It was as much as any of their lives was worth to venture for the present from the shelter of the ships. Da Gama would listen to nothing. On the following morning he landed with twelve

stout followers and demanded admission to the Zamorin's court. He was received with great ceremony, and conducted through the city to the prince's country house some five miles away. Meanwhile the Arab merchants had employed every device to poison the mind of the Zamorin against the new-comers. Da Gama, too, had forgotten to bring with him a present fit for the acceptance of so high a dignitary. The Zamorin hesitated. Should he accord to these strangers the privileges of peaceful traders, or would it be wiser, if they were the lawless pirates the Arabs made them out to be, to strangle his thirteen visitors and drive the foreign ships from his harbour? For a moment the fate of da Gama and his companions hung in the balance ; but in the interview which was granted to the Portuguese leader, the latter displayed such a resolute attitude and spoke with such adroitness of the advantages to be derived from an alliance with his country that the scale turned in his favour. The prince, with some misgiving, it is true, allowed him not only to return to his ships, but also to take on board a valuable cargo.

As soon as his trading transactions were

completed da Gama left the port, not venturing, so bitter was the hostility of the Arabs, to repair his vessels there. This he did at an island a little to the north of Calicut, and then set sail for Europe. After a voyage of a year, he got back to Lisbon in September 1499. King Manoel raised him to the peerage and made him Admiral of the Indies.

CHAPTER V

THE PORTUGUESE EASTERN EMPIRE

SOON after da Gama's return, a second expedition was ordered for India. The attitude of the Zamorin of Calicut had convinced the King that it was of no use to send a small fleet. It was evident that the Arabs were prepared to offer an active resistance to any attempt of Christian Europeans to win a trading footing in the East. And the Portuguese, from the first, were set on the attainment of more than a mere share of the trade; they wanted the monopoly of it. A struggle was inevitable, and the first requisite for entering upon it was the dispatch of a properly manned and equipped fleet adequate in numbers for defence or attack. Thirteen ships were fitted out, carrying in addition to their crews 1,200 soldiers, and the command was given to an experienced navigator named Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In order to avoid the difficult winds and currents near the western coast of Africa,

he took a different course from that followed by previous captains, and stood out into the Atlantic. So far did he proceed in this direction that on reaching seventeen degrees of south latitude he came on land. It was Brazil. A Spaniard had visited the coast a short time before, but since it proved to lie to the east of the line of demarcation drawn by Pope Alexander, Spain waived her claim to the sovereignty of the country.¹ The rest of the outward voyage was chiefly remarkable for a furious storm lasting for twenty days in which four of the ships foundered. One of these carried the brave Bartholomew Diaz.

Cabral refitted at Mozambique the six vessels to which, by the time of his arrival thither, his fleet had been reduced, and then steered for Calicut. His first action here was to seize a Moorish merchantman lying in the roadstead and present her to the Zamorin. This display of audacity made the Rajah begin to look on the Portuguese as people whom it might be as well to propitiate. He gave Cabral a house in the town, and allowed him to appoint a

¹ Brazil still preserves the stone cross erected by Cabral ere he sailed from Santa Cruz, as he called the spot at which he landed.

resident consul and to commence trading operations. But the consul and his men behaved with such arrogance that after a short time the exasperated citizens, abetted by the Moors, attacked them in their quarters and massacred every one of them. Cabral then sailed to Cochin. The ruler of this city was hostile to the Zamorin, and consequently lent a favourable ear to the advances of the Portuguese admiral when the latter promised to assist him against his enemy and add Calicut to his dominions. At Cochin the fleet completed its cargoes and soon afterwards sailed for Lisbon.

Some little time before Cabral's return a squadron of four ships had been sent out from Portugal to meet him. This was a small expedition, and, beyond the fact that it discovered Ascension Island on the outward and S. Helena on the homeward voyage, was of no particular importance. Its actions on the Malabar Coast, however, are worthy of remembrance. Having missed Cabral, the four vessels proceeded to Cananor. Here their commander learnt that the Zamorin was preparing to attack him with forty ships. He at once sailed north, sought out the enemy in his own waters,

and gave him a thorough beating. He then returned to Cananor, and after taking in valuable cargoes made his way home.

This feat is typical of the spirit of almost contemptuous daring in which the Portuguese approached their Eastern enterprise. But the truth is that the odds were not so heavily against them as at first sight they appeared to be. The Arabs had large numbers of ships, many of them carrying heavy guns as a protection against the pirates who lurked about every inlet and island of the Asiatic seas. They owned permanent stations at all sorts of places along the whole length of the coast. With several of the native princes they were on terms of old-established commercial friendship. But they had little notion of handling a ship as an engine of war, and were ignorant of combined tactics. Their vessels, too, were so badly built that they could scarcely be steered at all in any but the fairest weather. The Portuguese, on the other hand, though at first small isolated groups operating against a numerous enemy in waters half a world's breadth from their base, were the boldest and most skilful sailors of that age, and possessed ships superior at every point to those of their ad-

versaries. Above all, they had at their backs a tradition of long-continued maritime successes, and a firm conviction that they were the destined masters of the Indian Ocean.

Nevertheless there was about this time a party in Portugal which advised the abandonment of the attempt to acquire territory or trade in India. They pointed to the jealousy and opposition which the arrival of the fleets out there had aroused. It was madness, they urged, for one of the smallest of European kingdoms to embark on so ambitious an undertaking. She could never hope to make permanent headway against even the Moors of Asia alone, and when these should be joined by the Turks and Egyptians, her Eastern career would reach a swift and certain end. But the King took a different view, and so fascinated were the people generally by the opening up of what seemed a road to unlimited riches that no difficulty was experienced in finding volunteers to face the dangers of the quest. During the next few years fleet after fleet went out, heavily armed, from Lisbon. The adventurers made no disguise of their intentions. They had to deal with the native races of India and beyond, and with the Moors. Both must

acknowledge them as their masters. There were hard knocks ahead, but they made nothing of that. On the face of it, it appeared an impossible task for a handful of militant traders. Yet within a dozen years Portugal was on the way to command, with 20,000 men, 15,000 miles of the coasts of two unknown and distant continents.

In 1502 Vasco da Gama, with twenty ships, sailed on his second voyage. He defeated the fleet of the Zamorin in a pitched battle, took two merchantmen carrying untold treasure, and brought back, with a mass of spices and plate, an idol of solid gold weighing sixty pounds, whose eyes were huge emeralds, and in whose breast was set a ruby as large as a chestnut. On his way to India, too, he had compelled the King of Quiloa to become a vassal of Portugal, and when he landed triumphantly at Lisbon that East African monarch's first tribute was carried before him through the streets in a silver basin. Da Gama was followed immediately by Francisco de Albuquerque, who was accompanied by his nephew, the great Alfonso. The Portuguese found, on reaching India, that the implacable Zamorin had expelled the King of Cochin from his dominions. They

drove out the invader and restored their ally. In return he gave them permission to build a fort and a church in Cochin. Here they left 150 men in the fort and three ships in the roadstead. Francisco's vessel went down on the homeward voyage, but Alfonso got back in safety and presented the King with forty pounds of large pearls and two horses, a Persian and an Arab, the first of those breeds to be seen in Portugal.

A permanent footing now began to be secured. Henceforth a fleet was constantly maintained on the Malabar Coast, and the next expedition was put in charge of a nobleman who bore the title of Viceroy and Governor-General of the Indies. This was Don Francisco Almeida, a man who did more than anyone, save his immediate successor, to build up the Portuguese power in the East. On the way out he took Mombasa by storm and reduced its inhabitants to slavery. Arriving in India, he set systematically about the business of capturing the markets. Almeida had a greater belief in trade than in conquest. "He sought to subordinate everything to sea-power and commerce, to concentrate on the maintenance of maritime ascendancy, to annex no territory, but to leave

the defence of necessary factories to friendly native Powers who would in return receive the support of the Portuguese fleet." He knew that his countrymen could never penetrate far inland; their numbers were insufficient. As a Chinaman said, "The Portuguese are like fishes: remove them from the water and they straightway die." So rapid under his administration was the growth of Portuguese enterprise and Portuguese ascendancy that in a short time he became strong enough to forbid any vessel to traffic on the coast without first obtaining a licence from himself.

Yet Almeida's was not merely a policy of peaceful penetration. When occasion demanded he could, and did, deal the shrewdest of blows. The Mohammedans of Egypt, like those of India, were jealous of Portugal's trade; they were infuriated by her assumption of paramount authority. Fights by sea between the rival Powers became a matter of every-day occurrence. Almeida resolved to crush the enemy. With nineteen ships he engaged the combined fleets of Egypt, Cambay, and Calicut off the port of Diu, won an overwhelming victory at practically no cost to his own side, and relieved the vanquished of every ounce of



~ AFONSO DALBOQUERQUE ~

AFFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE



valuables in their holds. This gave him control of the whole coast between Diu and Cochin.

It was his last success. His master feared that the subject might overshadow the king. The term of his Viceroyalty had expired, and in 1509 he was superseded by Alfonso de Albuquerque. On the latter's arriving and making known the commission he had received to take over the administration, Almeida refused to recognise his credentials and threw him into prison. At the end of three months, however, the Grand Marshal of Portugal appeared on the scene and confirmed the appointment. The ex-Viceroy immediately sailed for Europe. At Saldanha Bay, north-west of the Cape, he went ashore with fifty of his companions. They were attacked by savages and massacred to a man.¹

Albuquerque's policy was essentially different from that of his predecessor; it was a policy of colonisation and territorial aggrandisement. In his opinion Portuguese success in the East depended primarily on the military possession of strategic points. It was impossible to hold the command of the sea, especially during the

¹ The witches of Cochin had predicted that he would never pass the Cape alive. Their prophecy proved nearly correct.

monsoon months, with a fleet based on Lisbon, six months' sail away. Experience showed that Portuguese factories needed Portuguese forts. The first thing to do was to establish himself firmly on the coast of India itself. Accordingly, early in 1510, he seized Goa, where the Hindoos hailed him as a deliverer from their oppressors. The Mohammedans soon after drove him out. He abandoned the town for the moment, returned with reinforcements, and effected a permanent occupation in the autumn. Henceforward Goa became the Portuguese headquarters. A mint was set up in which copper and silver coins were struck bearing on one side the cross of the Order of Christ, on the reverse a sphere emblematic of the recent extension of King Manoel's dominions. The revenues of the Moorish mosques were confiscated and devoted to the maintenance of the Christian church of S. Catherine.¹ Many of the Portuguese

¹ In 1559 an Archbishop and primate of the Indies was established at Goa. Neither Spaniards nor Portuguese ever neglected, so far as externals were concerned, the religious needs of their colonial subjects. Their generosity in seeking to secure for the converted Moor, Hindoo, or American Indian all the spiritual blessings of the next world was only equalled by the greed and violence with which they cut him off from an equal share with themselves in the temporal prizes of this.

received grants of land and became permanent settlers. Presently the dispossessed Moors returned to the town and were allowed to trade on condition of acknowledging the Europeans' supremacy.

The new governor next turned his arms against Malacca. Some time previously a small squadron had been dispatched to make discoveries in that direction, and a few of the Portuguese had been permitted to settle in the town. Trouble following, the Arabs had set upon the new-comers, butchered most of them, and seized the property of all. A remnant had escaped ; several were still prisoners there. Albuquerque sailed for Sumatra in May 1511, with nineteen ships and 1,400 fighting men. As he approached the Straits he captured a vessel containing some Malays, one of whom had been a leader in the treacherous attack on the Portuguese residents of Malacca. The man was recognised and immediately received a number of mortal wounds. To everyone's astonishment not a drop of blood left his body. But an Indian searched him and took from his arm an amulet of bone, on which he bled freely and expired. The bracelet was brought to the commander as a charm of great value. Albuquerque de-

manded of the Sultan of Malacca the release of the prisoners and the restitution of their property. On his refusal he assaulted the town and took it within a few days.¹ Three thousand pieces of cannon, it is said, were captured, and so rich a booty that the share of a fifth part reserved for the King was bought by local merchants for 200,000 pieces of gold. As at Goa, Albuquerque built a fort, set up a mint, and erected a church dedicated to the Virgin. Then, having received messages of friendship from the native chiefs of the mainland and neighbouring islands, he prepared to return to headquarters. Soon after the fleet had weighed anchor a storm overtook it and destroyed the greater part of the ships with all the treasure on board. The general himself was in a boat pulling away from the wreck of his own vessel when he saw a young man fall from a mast into the sea. He immediately dived in and rescued him.

¹ The news of the capture of Malacca was received with great satisfaction in Portugal and forwarded by the Government to the Holy See. Manoel's ambassadors came to Rome bringing Eastern presents of a varied character, including gold, jewels, embroidery, Persian horses, leopards, a panther, and last of all an enormous elephant which went down thrice on its knees before the Pope.

East of Malacca in the same year an embassy was dispatched to the court of Siam; and shortly afterwards two expeditions went to the Moluccas, where they laid the foundations of the Portuguese rule in the Malay Archipelago.

Meanwhile the Viceroy, having seized the eastern gate of the Indian Ocean, resolved to lock the two western ones also against the Mohammedans. In 1513 he left Goa to make an attempt on the Red Sea entrance. The Portuguese already held Socotra, but their possession of that island had proved insufficient to shut out the Egyptian traders. Albuquerque decided to attack Aden. At this period he nursed more than one romantic project. He would ally himself with Prester John of Abyssinia, cut a canal through the mountains, and thus leave Egypt a desert by draining the upper waters of the Nile into the Red Sea. He would secure a base on the eastern shore of that sea, raid Mecca and Medina, seize the coffin of the Prophet, and hold it till the Turks gave up in exchange the Holy Places of Jerusalem. The venture proved a failure. The Moors beat him off at Aden.¹ He left it behind him untaken

¹ Aden was never conquered by the Portuguese. In 1538 it fell into the hands of the Turks. In 1839 it was annexed

and essayed to go on and make a survey of the ports beyond. But trouble at Goa was recalling him thither. A superstition, too, existed that no Christian ship could sail the Red Sea. There was a lodestone at the bottom which would draw every nail from the timbers.¹ For the time being Albuquerque relinquished his schemes in that direction.

His next enterprise was more successful. He had already, before displacing Almeida, established a factory at the port of Ormuz, which commands the entrance to the Persian Gulf. This had been followed by the Portuguese exacting customs on goods sent from Persia to India. Albuquerque now captured the fort at Ormuz, and with it the control of the traffic that passed up the Gulf and through Mesopotamia to the Levant.

Only Aden remained to conquer. That ac-

to British India and subsequently made a free port. The P. and O. Steamship Company (founded 1835) made it one of their coaling-stations, and its importance in this capacity has grown immensely since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

¹ The Mohammedan vessels scored a point here. They were built of Indian teak, a wood so hard that iron nails could not be driven through it. The planks were fastened with wooden pins and ropes of coconut fibre.

complished, his work would at last be crowned by "the closing of the gates of the Straits." With restless energy the great Viceroy set again about the task. But death caught him in the midst of his preparations. He died on his quarter-deck off Goa in December 1515, clad in the dress of a Commendador of the Order of Santiago. When his will was read it was found to contain directions for the conveyance of his body to Portugal. But the colonists of Goa cried out against this. They were convinced that the safety of the city depended on their leader's bones being laid amongst them. The body was buried in the church of Our Lady and remained there for half a century, after which it was carried to Lisbon. So great had been Albuquerque's name for just and equal administration that for many years Moors and Hindoos were accustomed to visit his tomb to pray for his protection against the oppression of the rulers by whom he was succeeded.

Almeida and Albuquerque between them determined the lines of Portuguese expansion in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. By the middle of the sixteenth century Portugal owned in the Old World a number of scattered possessions along the coasts of West and East

Africa, Persia, Malabar, Ceylon, Indo-China, and the Malay Archipelago. She had also penetrated up the east coast of Asia as far as Japan, and had established extensive trade relations with the Chinese.¹ The wealth poured into the mother country from the Far East was, for those days, almost incredible. "About twenty ships, of 100 to 550 tons, sailed for Lisbon in the year. A voyage sometimes lasted two years, out and home, and cost, including the ship, over £4,000. But the freight might amount to £150,000. Between 1497 and 1612 the number of vessels engaged in the India trade was 806. Of these ninety-six were lost."²

But the Portuguese dominion in the East was fated not to endure. From first to last it was a house of cards; it never had the elements of stability. No officer, either of the civil, naval, or military services, was appointed for more than two years. The administration was corrupt from top to bottom. Salaries were small, perquisites enormous.³ Public offices were openly bought and sold. The policy of

¹ In 1559 the Portuguese were allowed to occupy Macao.

² Lord Acton: *Lectures on Modern History*.

³ At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Captain of Malacca was paid a salary of £300 a year. His annual profits amounted to £20,000.

the invaders towards the native races was a policy not of commerce but of spoliation; they made no attempt to deal justly with Mohammedan or Hindoo, but treated both with a harshness which frequently amounted to brutality. Apart from all this, Portugal, depopulated as she had been by her wars against Arabs and Spaniards, was never able to supply men enough to consolidate her Eastern conquests into an empire proper. In 1581 she was absorbed for sixty years in the monarchy of Spain, and as all Spanish ports were from that time closed to English and Dutch traders, the latter were now forced to cross the ocean for themselves in search of the merchandise which they could no longer obtain from Lisbon. Portugal had become their enemy. Holland was quicker than England to seize her opportunity. During the first half of the seventeenth century she occupied most of the more valuable islands of the East. England's turn came later in India itself.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS

C HRISTOPHER COLUMBUS was born in Genoa or its environs in or soon after 1447; the year has never been certainly settled. His father, Domenico, was a weaver by trade; his mother, Susanna, a silk-weaver's daughter. Little is known about Columbus's early boyhood. Somewhere he learnt to write a good hand and to draw first-rate maps. Later on he studied for a short period at the University of Pavia, where he specialised in cosmography and geometry. At fourteen he was afloat, and spent some years in sailing the Mediterranean. Beginning as a cabin boy, he was drawn in time by his love of adventure into the ranks of the corsairs and served under one Niccolo Colon¹ (no kinsman, despite his name), who had a reputation among the free lances

¹ Columbus's own name was at this time spelt Colon. It was only after his death, when the magnitude of his achievement came to be more fully understood, that an admiring Europe paid him the compliment of giving it a Latin form.

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS. 101

of the sea. Niccolo's master, so far as he owned one at all, was Louis of France, in whose interest he harried the merchantmen plying between Venice and England. The "French pirate's" sphere of operations extended beyond the Mediterranean, and long before this fighting phase of Christopher's career was over it had taken him round the coasts of Portugal, Spain and France, and up the English Channel.

In 1470 he and Niccolo engaged the Venetians off Cape S. Vincent. The battle lasted all day. Christopher's ship and the enemy she had grappled caught fire, and to escape burning the young captain jumped overboard. "Being an excellent swimmer, and seeing himself about two leagues from land, he laid hold of an oar which fortune offered him, and sometimes resting and sometimes swimming, it pleased God, who was preserving him for greater ends, to give him strength to get to land. . . . It was not far from Lisbon, where he knew there were many Genoese, and he went there as fast as he could; and being recognised by many friends, he was so courteously received and entertained that he set up house and married in that city." ¹

¹ The account of Columbus's son Fernando.

It was about the year 1473 that Columbus married. His bride was Philippa Moniz, daughter of that Perestrello whom Prince Henry had made hereditary governor of Porto Santo. Philippa's sister's husband was now governor, and Philippa herself possessed an estate in the island, whither she took Columbus for their honeymoon. The Genoese captain had become an adopted citizen of Portugal, and set up as a professional drawer of maps and charts. For some time he lived at Porto Santo, and made more than one voyage thence to the Guinea Coast. Once, too, he struck out north again, and probably penetrated as far as Iceland. During this period Columbus was in constant touch with the inner circle of Portuguese discoverers, and, in addition to what he learnt from those practical men, he read whatever he could get hold of that bore in any way on the theory that was gradually building in his mind. About 1474 the hopes of Portuguese navigators suffered a check. They had gone far eastwards past Sierra Leone, and had expected soon to reach the southern limit of the continent. But now the shore-line ran southward again apparently without end. The sea voyage to India round Africa was evidently going to be

a very much longer business than anyone had bargained for. But what if there were a shorter way ?

To the plain man of the fifteenth century the earth continued to present itself in its mediæval aspect of a kind of vague disc. That was the authorised version of the world inherited from a remote past and still accepted by the majority of Europeans. By Columbus's day, however, the energy of explorers had enlarged, and was still enlarging, the boundaries of the known world. In geographical science, too, as in other fields, the Italian renaissance of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had stirred many of the better educated classes to a more adventurous habit of thought. An increasing number of geographers believed in the sphericity of the earth. Among these was Paul Toscanelli, of Florence, the most famous savant of his age. Columbus set special store by his opinions and entered into a correspondence with him. In 1474 the old philosopher sent him a map of the world, and followed up the gift, a little later, with an encouraging letter. "I am glad," he says, "that the chart is well understood, and that the voyage laid down is not only possible but true, certain, honourable, very advantageous, and most

glorious among all Christians. . . . I do not at all wonder that you, who have a great heart, and the Portuguese nation, which has always had notable men engaged on its undertakings, are eagerly bent upon bringing this voyage to pass." Columbus also came across and studied with great attention at this time a book of the early fifteenth century¹ from which he gathered that Eratosthenes had in the third century B.C. measured the earth's circumference by astronomical calculation. The Greek geographer had given nearly the correct distance round at the Equator. Toscanelli, however, put it at 18,000 miles. This view Columbus accepted, and by combining it with an exaggerated estimate of the breadth of the land mass of the Old World, reckoned that, by sailing due west, he would strike the eastern shores of Asia at about the meridian of what is now San Francisco. *By sailing west*—mark the words! Columbus was not the only original geographical thinker of his day; yet where others are forgotten his memory survives, because to originality of thought he added

¹ The *Imago Mundi*, by Pierre d'Ailly. It was based on an earlier work of the thirteenth century, the *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon, England's greatest mediæval philosopher.

originality of action. Not long after his marriage he determined that sooner or later he would go out across the "Green Sea of Darkness" and test the possibility of "reaching the East by the West."

It is worth noting that alongside of his scientific authorities he earnestly consulted the writings of the Old Testament prophets. He found in them many passages which he took to have a direct bearing on the project he had set before himself, and in his mind the belief steadily grew that he was the inevitable instrument of Heaven, the man chosen from among all others to carry the Cross into Asia by the western way. This conviction coloured his every act, every thought, and is constantly evident in his writings. It fortified him against all the disappointments of the years of waiting; through all the triumphs and humiliations of the after-period of achievement it never left him.

Quite apart, however, from the speculations of the theorists and the indications of the prophets, there was other evidence of a more tangible nature which pointed to the existence of land across the ocean. Seeds, branches of trees, and huge canes, all of species unknown

in Europe, had been found in the Atlantic or deposited by westerly winds on the coasts of the Azores. Pieces of curiously-carved wood had drifted as far as Porto Santo. Pedro Correo, Philippa's relative, had seen one of these, and was convinced that the carving had never been done with a knife. At Flores had been washed up two drowned men, broad-faced, "differing in aspect from Christians," certainly neither Africans nor Europeans.

The first person to whom Columbus applied for assistance in carrying out his voyage across the ocean was John II of Portugal. This was in 1481. The Portuguese African voyages were proving expensive, and had not yet succeeded in rounding the continent. The Indian goal by that route was yet far to seek. John was attracted by Columbus's proposition, which offered him a short-cut to the wealth to which his sailors had been struggling for so long. But the council to which the question was referred reported adversely on the prospect of success. The King was dissatisfied with the decision, yet the price which the Genoese had put upon his services was so high that, in view of the council's attitude, he was unwilling to incur the expense of fitting out an expedition

for him. In this dilemma he descended to an unworthy piece of trickery. Columbus was asked to submit charts showing the details of his intended route. On his complying with the request, a ship was secretly dispatched to make the voyage. She proceeded to the Cape Verde Islands, and stood out thence into the Atlantic; but after a few days' sail the pilots lost heart and put back again, and on their return poured contempt on the idea of such an undertaking ever succeeding. Columbus was furious. Some time before his wife had died, and he resolved to turn his back on the country where he had met with such treacherous treatment. It was a considerable time, however, before he could get away, since a watch was kept upon his movements in case he might approach some other court with his project. Eventually, at the end of 1484, he escaped from Lisbon into Spain, taking with him his son Diego. At the same time he dispatched his brother Bartholomew to England to sound King Henry VII.

It is curious to reflect how narrowly England missed the prize of the New World. Henry VII was the first of modern English statesmen, the first to see clearly that his country's true path of expansion lay across wider waters than

those which led to France. But Bartholomew's mission failed. He was shipwrecked, he fell among pirates, he was a long time in getting to court. And when he came at last with the offer of a continent in his hand, the King was a long time in making up his mind. Henry was naturally cautious ; he always looked all round a bargain. Had he been a little prompter, he might have anticipated history. As it was, four years passed before the English Government at length invited Columbus to come to London and unfold his scheme in person. By that time the great adventurer was practically committed to the service of Spain.

After crossing the Spanish border Columbus addressed himself in turn to the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and Medina Celi, grandees of the first rank and great possessions. Each was half tempted to extend his patronage to the enterprise ; each finally decided against it. But Medina Celi gave the Italian a letter of introduction to Queen Isabella. Armed with this, the latter made his way to the court at Cordova.

Columbus was now about forty years old, a tall man of grave bearing. His strong face, with its high cheek-bones and powerful nose,

was of a fresh reddish colour. His hair had gone pure white ten years ago. His grey eyes were thoughtful and remote in their habitual expression, but apt at a word to blaze suddenly with the passionate enthusiasm that never ceased to consume his spirit. His whole air was one of distinction and authority.

He arrived at Cordova at an unpropitious moment for getting what he wanted. Ferdinand and Isabella were embarking on their final effort to push the Moors out of the Peninsula. For enterprises other than the war in hand there was no leisure and no money. The Sovereigns, however, were not insensible to the advantages that would accrue to Spain if such an expedition as that proposed by Columbus were successfully carried out under her patronage. They accordingly secured him to their service by the bestowal of a small pension, and after some time ordered a conference of astronomers and cosmographers at Salamanca to consider the feasibility of the undertaking. The majority of the council were unfavourable to Columbus. They appear to have regarded him from the first as a mere adventurer bent on obtaining notoriety by attempting to subvert the old notions of the form of the world sup-

ported not only by scientific tradition, but by the authority of Holy Writ. The Genoese seaman stood up among the doctors and unfolded his theory. He spoke with dignity and eloquence. He based his arguments on the conclusions of the classic geographers and the results of modern travel, and backed them with quotations from the Prophets. They refused to take him seriously. They countered the Prophets with verses from Genesis, the Psalms, the Epistles, and the Gospels. They ridiculed his geographical beliefs. "Is there anyone so foolish," he was asked, "as to believe that there are antipodes with their feet opposite to ours, people who walk with their heels upwards and their heads hanging down; that there is a part of the world in which all things are topsy-turvy, where the trees grow with their branches downwards, and where it rains, hails, and snows upwards? Besides, even if the earth were spherical and a ship succeeded in sailing to India by the westward route, she would never get back again; it would obviously be impossible for her to reach home uphill."

Yet, notwithstanding the bigoted opposition of the greater number, one or two of the clearer-sighted members of the conference took Co-

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 111

lumbus's part and managed to avert a downright condemnation of his scheme. The result was procrastination. The court was at this time constantly moving from city to city of Southern Spain. Columbus followed it. But he could get nothing definite from anybody. In 1489 he was summoned to attend a second conference of the learned, this time in Seville, only to find, when he reached the city, that the meeting had been postponed. In the following year, his patience exhausted, he pressed the Sovereigns for a decisive reply to his request for their assistance in his project. After a further delay the council at length met again and pronounced formally against him. Nevertheless Ferdinand was still unwilling to turn his back once and for all on this persistent sailor. His idea had been condemned by the mass of scientific opinion ; the chances were a hundred to one against there being anything in it. But there was just the hundredth chance. The president of the council was ordered to inform the suitor that while the war continued the Sovereigns could do nothing for him, but that when it was over they would consider his application. Columbus in disgust prepared to quit Spain for France.

The monastery of Santa Maria de Rabida was situated about a mile from the harbour of Palos. At its gates one day a traveller stopped to beg a little bread and water for his child. The prior, struck by the man's appearance, asked him who he was, and was soon in possession of his story. Being well versed in geography and astronomy, he was deeply interested in what he heard, and when he found that Columbus intended to carry his offer to the King of France, determined that he would do all in his power to secure yet for Spain the services of one whose scheme seemed to offer such splendid possibilities. He persuaded the traveller to stay awhile as his guest, and sent for some scientific friends to confer with him. One of these was Martin Alonzo Pinzon, a wealthy and adventurous navigator. Pinzon at once became fascinated by Columbus's project, and promised not only to contribute to the cost of the voyage, but to sail in company with him. Soon afterwards the prior, who had formerly been the Queen's confessor, saddled his mule and rode to court to urge Isabella to grant Columbus a personal interview. So convincing were his arguments that the Queen consented, and ordered that a sum of 20,000

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 113

maravedies¹ should be sent to the Genoese captain to defray the expenses of the journey and provide him with a suitable outfit of clothes.

Columbus reached the court just when the last of the Moorish kings was surrendering the citadel of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella. It was the final episode in a struggle between Christians and Mohammedans which had lasted for 800 years. The whole nation abandoned itself to an outburst of joy. Courtiers and soldiers vied with each other in doing honour to the Sovereigns, who, surrounded by all the chivalry of Spain, made a triumphal entry into the stronghold which had so stoutly withstood the progress of their arms. In that brilliant throng the figure of Columbus passed at first almost unnoticed. But the Queen had not forgotten her promise, and soon a committee was appointed to meet him. Opinion had now swung round. The principal question for discussion was no longer the feasibility of the voyage, but the terms on which it was to be undertaken. Columbus asked for the title of Admiral and Viceroy of all lands discovered by him, and one-tenth of all profits gained by trade

¹ Equal to 216 dollars.

or conquest. To the Queen's advisers these appeared extravagant conditions. They resented, too, the attitude which this insignificant foreigner adopted in dealing with the Crown of Spain. But Columbus was unbending. The Sovereigns might accept or reject his offer as they pleased. Those were his terms, and he would stand by them.

The negotiations were broken off. Columbus immediately left the Spanish court and started again for France.

Above anything he ever did, this action of the great navigator's is typical of the spirit in which he regarded his enterprise. A man of humble origin, with little money and more enemies than friends, he had spent many years of the prime of life in striving and waiting for the chance which now at last lay open to him. Yet so high was his conception of his destined part in shaping future history that, sooner than abate a fraction of the dignities and rewards that he considered the due of Heaven's chosen servant, he was prepared without hesitation to forgo the hard-won patronage of Spain, and to start again, at forty-six years of age, the weary task of a penniless suppliant at the feet of an unknown king.

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 115

Fortunately there were some about the court who realised the greatness of the opportunity that was slipping from their Sovereigns' grasp. No sooner had Columbus departed than they hastened to the Queen and entreated her to recall him. Their urgency had its effect on Isabella. She was a woman of rapid decision, and as she listened to their pleading something of Columbus's own spirit appears suddenly to have seized her. Finally, "I undertake the enterprise," she said, "for my own crown of Castile, and will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary sum." On this Louis de St. Angel, Receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of Aragon, stepped forward and promised to advance the money. A horseman was sent after Columbus, and overtook him a short distance from Granada. At first he would not return; he had learnt to put no trust in Spanish princes. But in the end the messenger prevailed upon him and brought him back to the Queen.

Columbus now gained his object. Ferdinand's attitude, it is true, was less satisfactory than that of Isabella; his cold heart was incapable of either generosity or enthusiasm. But in deference to the wishes of his queen, he raised no further objections to the immediate

116 THE QUEST OF THE INDIES

prosecution of the voyage. Under the articles of the agreement drawn up by the royal secretary, Columbus was to have, and his heirs and successors after him, the office of Admiral of all lands discovered by him in the ocean. He was to be Viceroy of all such lands. He was to receive one-tenth of all precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other merchandise gained within his Admiralty. He might also, if he chose, contribute an eighth part of the expenses of the expedition, and receive another share equal to an eighth of the profits. The Sovereigns further allowed him to prefix the title of Don to his name, in those days not an empty privilege. Orders were issued that three ships should be fitted out at the port of Palos ; two of these were to be furnished by that little town, the third by the Admiral himself. Traders and merchants of the coasts of Andalusia were required to sell supplies of all kinds at a reasonable price. Volunteers for the voyage were to be free from prosecution for debt or criminal offences.

In Palos itself the expedition was unpopular. It was with difficulty that the vessels were provided, and no workmen could for some time be found to prepare them for sea. A large



COLOMBUS LANDING IN THE NEW WORLD
From an old engraving

number of the crews had to be pressed into the service, and had it not been for the assistance of Martin Alonzo Pinzon and his brothers, Columbus would probably never have succeeded in raising the third ship which he had promised to contribute. But at length, after nearly four months, preparations were complete, and half an hour before sunrise of August 3, 1492, the squadron weighed anchor and set sail.

The vessels selected by Columbus for his adventure were not remarkable for their size. The two smaller, the *Pinta* and the *Nina*, commanded respectively by Martin Alonzo Pinzon and his brother Vicente Yañez Pinzon, were just undecked coasting craft, built high in the bows and stern to provide shelter for the crews. The *Nina* was at first only lateen-rigged, but afterwards in the Canaries they fitted her with square sails like her consorts. The *Santa Maria*, in which the Admiral hoisted his flag, was a carrack of moderate dimensions, with a length over all of 128 feet, beam of 26 feet, and depth of $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet. She was completely decked and had three masts. It must be remembered, however, that the smallness of the ships, though it might diminish their chances of living through an ocean storm, was not

without its advantages. Columbus anticipated neither a rough nor a lengthy passage, and once across, his navigation would lie amongst the intricacies of an uncharted coast fringed, as he believed, with a multitude of islands. For such work he considered that large vessels would be of little use. About 120 persons embarked on the expedition, including a notary, a physician, a surgeon, and four pilots. One member of the ships' companies was an Englishman and one a Scotchman.

The first point for which they sailed was the Canaries. On the way thither the *Pinta* broke her rudder. This delayed them considerably, and when the islands were reached, three weeks were spent in a vain endeavour to replace the caravel by another vessel. Finally she was overhauled and got ready again for sea. During this interval the Admiral was put to a good deal of anxiety by the report that three Portuguese ships were in the neighbourhood, sent by King John to take him prisoner. Nothing came of it, however, and on September 6 the little fleet left its last port in the Old World and stood out into the lonely, unknown sea.

The voyage across the Atlantic occupied just over five weeks. From first to last the ships'

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 119

companies were a prey to superstitious fears and forebodings of disaster. Day after day they held on their course through the pleasant weather before a breeze so constant and steady that there was scarcely need ever to shift a sail. But day after day added its quota to the long leagues they were putting between them and the only world they knew. And what if the soft wind should never change? Were they to be blown for ever to the west beyond all possibility of return? So great was their dread of the distance they had travelled that in the public record of their progress Columbus found it necessary to make considerable subtractions from the number of miles covered in the daily run. They were little more than a week out when the compass needle began to fail them and no longer to point directly to the pole. The pilots shook their heads. This was a strange sea they were sailing, where Nature herself forsook allegiance to the laws that bound her elsewhere. They could make nothing of it. Nor could Columbus, nor any mariner for ages after him. This, however, did not prevent his furnishing an explanation of the phenomenon which presently relieved his navigators of some of their fears. On the night of

September 15 a great shaft of fire fell into the sea at some distance from the ships. It was a meteor such as frequently occurs in the Tropics, blazing with a brilliance unknown in higher latitudes. The crews were struck with awe and terror. They had looked upon the very sword of Heaven, flaming visible above forbidden waters. And now the sea was sea no longer. Patches of weed began to cluster about the surface, growing ever thicker, till at last, as far as the voyagers' sight could reach, it was all one meadow of green, and they nearly fast, it seemed, in the midst of it. The Admiral calmed their apprehensions. He had known before of this sea of weeds, which need occasion them no alarm; on the contrary, it was an indication of the proximity of land. And still the gentle wind blew, and still they drove on to the west.

After a time, so great became the fears of the sailors that many of them were for putting about and making their way back to Spain. Their murmurs against the Admiral grew every day louder and more vehement. Some even advised that he should be thrown overboard. Columbus faced the danger of mutiny with unruffled courage. He reasoned, expostulated,

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 121

threatened, bent them again to his will. Fortunately, ere matters reached a crisis signs of land began to appear. On the evening of September 25 Martin Alonzo Pinzon hailed the flagship from the deck of the *Pinta*: "Land! Land! Señor, I claim my reward!"¹ Far away to the south-west a dark mass was visible on the horizon. At once hope took the place of fear. Columbus threw himself on his knees, and the crews sang the *Gloria in Excelsis*. All night they stood to the south-west. But when the sun rose their eyes met nothing but sea and sky.

This was the first of several disappointments. But there were now increasing indications, principally in the shape of birds, shore-keeping fish, and floating vegetation, that they were approaching their object. Sailor after sailor gave the cry of "Land!" till Columbus was forced to rule that, should any man raise their hopes thus, and land not be discovered within three days, he would forfeit all future chance of earning the promised reward. So for awhile they kept on, alternating between confident expectation and black despair. At length, on

¹ The Sovereigns had promised a pension of 10,000 maravedies to the man who first sighted land.

October 10, the Admiral's crew came to him and said they would proceed no farther with the voyage. They would no longer tempt fate by searching for land across this shoreless sea. He answered them with gentle words, and pointed to the prizes of success now almost within their grasp. They burst out into clamorous reproaches against the adventurer with whom the life of every man there weighed for nothing in the pursuit of his mad ambition. But their anger had no effect on Columbus. He passed from persuasion to command. He had been sent on his mission by the Sovereigns of Spain, and come what might, he would persevere till it was accomplished. Let them return to their duty. They left him, muttering curses and imprecations.

The position of the Admiral seemed desperate. One and all his men were against him. It was impossible that he could compel them to go on much longer. As at the court of Isabella, so now at the end of the voyage itself, it looked as if he were to be foiled of success on its very threshold. But once more fortune changed. Next day appeared fresh signs of land so indisputable as to convince the most despondent among the crews. River weeds floated by ;

they saw a green fish known to frequent only coastal waters ; they picked up a reed, a board, and a carved stick. At sunset Columbus took his stand on the lofty poop of the *Santa Maria* and as the ships swept onward searched the shadows of the darkening sea for the land he knew could not be far away. About ten o'clock he made out what he thought to be a light glimmering in the distance, and moving up and down as if carried in the hand of some person walking along the shore. After a short while it disappeared and they saw it no more. At two in the morning the *Pinta* fired a gun. It was the signal agreed upon in case of sighting land.¹ Immediately the ships shortened sail and lay to, waiting for the dawn.

The coast as it appeared in the morning was that of a level island several miles in extent. It was woody and evidently inhabited, for the natives were seen hurrying down to the shore from every side to survey their strange visitors. After ordering the ships to anchor, Columbus got into his own boat, clad in scarlet and holding

¹ The coast was first seen by a sailor named Rodrigo de Triana, but the Admiral subsequently received the promised reward in consideration of his having previously spied the moving light,

the royal standard in his hand, and being joined by the other two captains in theirs, rowed to shore. On landing he knelt down, kissed the earth and returned thanks to God. He then drew his sword, and setting up the standard, called on the notary and his fellow-captains to witness that he took possession of the island, which he named San Salvador, in behalf of the Spanish Sovereigns. At the same time he commanded all present to take an oath of obedience to himself as Admiral and Viceroy. The enthusiasm of his companions was unbounded. They crowded round him, many with tears in their eyes, begged his forgiveness for their former disaffection, and promised to obey him implicitly for the future.

The islanders now approached, prostrating themselves at intervals on the ground and making signs which clearly indicated that they took the Spaniards for beings of celestial origin. The latter, at Columbus's bidding, suffered them to come near and touch their armour and their beards. The natives were of a tawny or copper hue. Their hair hung long, black and coarse about their shoulders. Their only dress was paint, with which they were plentifully covered. They possessed good features, and fine eyes of

a lightish colour, and were mostly men of a middle size. The Admiral distributed among them coloured caps, glass beads and hawks' bells, with which they were greatly pleased. It soon appeared that they had very little of value to give in exchange. Some possessed a few small ornaments of gold, and these they willingly surrendered; but when Columbus inquired by signs where this gold was procured, they answered in the same way by pointing to the south. From this and other equally vague information which he was able to gather, the Admiral came to the conclusion that he had reached one of the islands mentioned by Marco Polo as lying off the coast of Asia opposite to Cathay, and that the country to the south of which the natives seemed to speak was none other than Cipangu. He accordingly gave the islanders the name of Indians. As a matter of fact, he had made his landfall at one of the Bahama group to the north of Cuba.

After spending a fortnight in cruising among the Bahamas, the Spaniards arrived at the end of October in sight of the island of Cuba, along the north coast of which they at first proceeded in a westerly direction. Everything they saw filled them with admiration. Fertile valleys

and wide-spreading plains gave promise of a land of pleasant, easy habitation, while it was probable that the bold, lofty mountains that rose in the distance would yield the mineral wealth which was the great object of their desire. The clear rivers were full of fish; the forests that lined their banks down to the very shore of the sea swarmed with tropical birds as bright and varied in colour as the flowers that bloomed in every season of the year beneath that luxuriant sky. Columbus was enchanted with the country. "It is," he said, "the most beautiful island that eyes ever beheld."

The Spaniards made no attempt, however, to explore the beauties of Cuba. They had now native interpreters aboard, and from these they learnt that, while some gold was to be found there, it was much more abundant in another island farther to the east. The ships therefore made all sail in that direction. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, in the *Pinta*, the fastest sailer of the three, oustripped his companions and was soon lost to sight. On December 5 Columbus, with the *Santa Maria* and the *Nina*, passed the eastern point of Cuba and shortly afterwards approached Haiti. This was

the native name of the island next discovered. The Admiral himself called it Hispaniola. On the first appearance of the ships the people fled in terror. This made intercourse with them difficult, but luckily the Spaniards saved from drowning an Indian whose canoe had capsized, and, after taking him on board, treated him with studied kindness, made him presents, and then put him ashore to reassure his countrymen as to their pacific intentions. This policy was immediately successful. The ships were soon surrounded by canoes filled with crowds of Indians conveying provisions of various kinds, and willing to barter their golden trinkets for the cheap baubles which they viewed with such delight. The cacique, or ruler of the country, a prince of the name of Guacanagari, was invited by Columbus to the *Santa Maria*. He came, loaded with ornaments of gold, and informed his host that there were quantities of the metal in a land farther eastward still, called Cibao. This afterwards proved to be a mountain in the interior of the island, but the eager imagination of Columbus identified it with Cipangu, and a little later he parted with Guacanagari on the friendliest terms and hastened on his way along the coast. On

Christmas Eve, in calm weather, the flagship struck a hidden reef, slid off and sank.

No life was lost. The Admiral and all the crew escaped on board the *Nina*, and with the help of some natives sent them by Guacanagari, most of their effects and a good portion of the timbers of the vessel were got ashore. But nothing had been seen of the *Pinta* for some time, and the *Nina* was too small to accommodate her own crew and that of the *Santa Maria*. In this strait Columbus obtained permission from Guacanagari to build a fort out of the salvaged timbers and leave in it thirty-eight of his men, while he himself sailed for home, to return as soon as might be with assistance. The fort was quickly finished and named La Navidad, the garrison were furnished with provisions, articles for barter and means of defence, and Columbus sailed away.

Soon after leaving La Navidad the *Nina* sighted her missing consort. There is little doubt that it was his desire to be first home with news of the great discovery that had prompted Martin Alonzo Pinzon to give his companions the slip, but the Admiral was glad enough to see him again and professed himself satisfied with his excuses. For a few days

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS 129

longer the two ships skirted the north coast of the island, and finally, on January 11, set a course for Spain.

The weather was favourable during a great part of the homeward voyage, but as they neared the Azores it came on to blow, and a second time the *Pinta* disappeared. The *Nina* was now in the direst danger. Even Columbus seems to have given up all for lost. But he was resolved that the knowledge of his discovery should not perish with him in the ocean. He wrote two short accounts of his voyage, each on a sheet of parchment, and placed them in two carefully sealed casks. One of the casks he threw overboard, the other he left on deck. This done, he calmly awaited the foundering of the ship. But the adventurers were not destined thus to lose their lives and the fruit of what they had accomplished. The storm fell and the danger passed. In the middle of February they reached S. Mary's, in the Azores, and after some unfriendly treatment at the hands of the jealous Portuguese there, were allowed to refit and proceed. A month later, on March 15, 1493, after an expedition lasting for seven and a half months, Columbus anchored at Palos, the port of his departure. Next day

Martin Alonzo Pinzon made a harbour in Northern Spain. He had tried to anticipate his commander. When he heard that Columbus was already back his spirit broke. The physical hardships he had undergone had exhausted his frame, and combined with his bitter mortification to throw him into a fever. He died soon after landing. It is not necessary to judge him too harshly. He lacked loyalty, but he was a brave man, and he seems to have nursed a suspicion that the Admiral intended to assume sole credit for the success of an enterprise in which he himself had played a conspicuous part, and which, in fact, but for his own encouragement and assistance in the first instance, might never have been undertaken.

Columbus met with a magnificent reception. The court was at Barcelona, and as he rode thither Spain crowded from every side to gaze upon the man who had done what all the world had deemed impossible. His entry into the city was a public triumph. He walked through the streets in the midst of a number of Indians whom he had brought with him from the West. Pieces of gold and curious objects were carried before him in open baskets for all to see. When he came into the presence of the Sovereigns

he knelt down and would have kissed their hands ; but they rose from their thrones and commanded him to be seated, an unprecedented honour for a subject. Then he told them the tale of his adventures.

On this occasion even the cold blood of Ferdinand seems to have warmed to something approaching enthusiasm. He confirmed the Admiral in all his privileges, and permitted him to quarter the Castle and Lion, the royal arms, with his proper bearings, a group of islands surrounded by waves. To these arms the following motto was afterwards added :

A Castilla y à Leon
Nuevo mundo dió Colon.

CHAPTER VII

LATER VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS

COLUMBUS had no difficulty in procuring vessels and volunteers for his next voyage. Spain was full of young soldiers, many of them of high rank, many with empty purses, all eager, now that the war against the Moors was over, to turn to a field which offered a prospect of adventure, fame and wealth. On September 25, 1493, the Admiral's second expedition sailed out of Cadiz. It numbered seventeen ships and 1,500 men.

A more southerly course was steered on this occasion than in the previous year. The fleet went down as far as the Cape Verde Islands before striking westward. Nothing occurred to hinder the passage across the Atlantic, and on November 2 an island was reached which Columbus, in consideration of its being discovered on a Sunday, called Dominica.

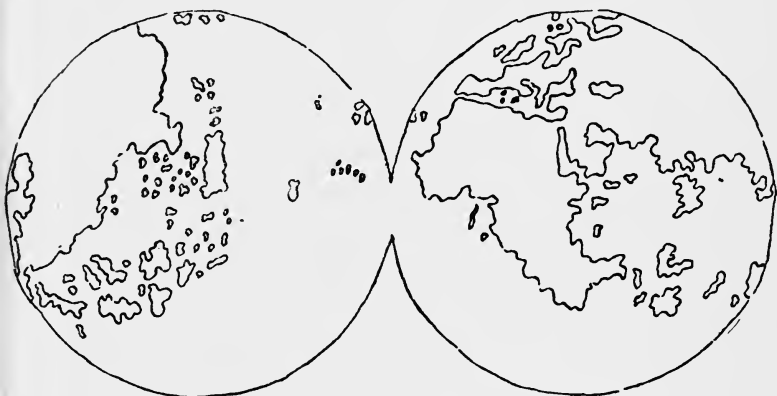
The Spaniards were now among the Lesser Antilles, reaching sicklewise from Porto Rico to the South American coast. Here for the first time they encountered the Caribs, that fierce race of cannibals against whose incursions Guacanagari had asked Columbus's protection. At Guadeloupe they tasted the pineapple, sweetest of fruits, but were struck with horror to see human limbs roasting at the fire or hanging from the boughs of trees against a future feast. The natives resisted them everywhere, attacking them in their canoes, the women equalling the men in the desperation with which they fought. A few prisoners were taken, and after three weeks among the islands, the expedition rounded the eastern end of Hispaniola and came to the spot where the fort of La Navidad had been established.

It was no longer in existence. All that remained of the structure was its ashes. They came across one or two chests and some garments which had escaped the flames, but could find no trace of their comrades, alive or dead. Later in the day some Indians timidly approached, and the Admiral was not long in learning the dismal story. The men whom he had left behind had courted their fate. No

sooner had he sailed for Europe than they had commenced to disregard every injunction for their safety which he had laid upon them. They had made no effort to dig or plant for themselves. They had displayed an insolent and savage brutality in their dealings with the natives. Worst of all, after incurring hatred and contempt on every hand, they had not even taken the precaution to hold together, but had split into two parties, a number of them striking into the interior for the mountain of Cibao, whose every rock, they understood, was bright with ungathered gold. Thus weakened, they had been attacked by the enraged islanders and every one of them killed.

Many of the Spaniards were for taking summary vengeance on the natives, but Columbus, having satisfied himself that the tragedy had been brought about by the folly and excesses of the colonists themselves, would not allow it, and exonerated the cacique Guacanagari, in particular, from all blame in the matter. He proceeded at once to found a fresh settlement not far from Cibao in a plain adjoining a good harbour. Here he built a church and store-house of stone and a number of reed huts, and gave the town the name of Isabella, in

compliment to the Queen. Then, after exploring the interior in several directions, he appointed a council, with his brother Don Diego at its



THE WORLD
ACCORDING TO
MARTIN BEHAIM OF NUREMBERG,
1492

head, to govern the new colony, and set out again with three small vessels on his voyage to the West.

Five days' sail brought them to the eastern end of Cuba. From this point they went along the south coast. The natives were everywhere

friendly, and came off to the ships in canoes full of fruits and other provisions. They gave the Admiral to understand that gold was to be found in a great country to the south. On August 3 he accordingly altered course in that direction, and was not long in sighting the blue mountains of Jamaica. But there was no gold to be got, and in a short time Columbus turned north again and continued his voyage along the Cuban shore. Soon he fell in with a cluster of small islands, some completely barren, others covered with tropical vegetation. He was now convinced that he had entered the vast archipelago spoken of by Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville as situated off East Asia. The people, too, told him that farther to the west lay a country called Mangiu, inhabited by a race of men who wore clothing. This he at once identified with Polo's Mangi. Obviously he was approaching the territories of the Grand Khan.

But the men were growing weary of threading the dangers of that difficult coast, and the ships had been so severely handled by wind and sea that when his companions urged him to desist at present from prosecuting the voyage any farther, he found it impossible to refuse;

He would not put about, however, till every man had signed a paper, drawn up by the official notary, declaring his confident belief that the coast they were on was a part of India.

They returned by way of Jamaica, whose southern shore they skirted, and then stood north for Hispaniola. But the wind now turned contrary and storm after storm assailed them. When the weather moderated, the Admiral tried to get out to sea again and sail eastwards to discover more of the islands. But the physical and mental strain he had undergone proved too much for him. He sank into a state of coma, and in this condition was brought back by his men to the port of Isabella. When he awoke from his lethargy he was overjoyed to find his brother Bartholomew standing at his bedside.

Bartholomew Columbus lacked the imaginative genius of the Admiral, but in all the practical qualities of a bold and successful navigator he was his equal, and in administrative capacity probably his superior. He had a harder, sterner temper than his brother, whom he served with a constant loyalty in which the latter had learnt to place implicit trust. His life had been largely spent in ad-

venture at sea ; indeed, he is said to have sailed in the expedition of Bartholomew Diaz which resulted in the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope.

Columbus immediately made Bartholomew Adelantado, or Lieutenant-Governor. During his absence the Spaniards left in Hispaniola had shown nothing of the spirit that makes true colonists. These men possessed the quality of courage, but that was their only asset. Many of them were mere adventurers whose one idea was to pick up in the West an easy, ample fortune and return to enjoy it in Spain. When they found that the gold they had fancied so plentiful was scarce and difficult to get, and that it was only by hard work that they could expect to wrest even a living from the ground, their bitter disappointment vented itself in outbursts against Columbus, the author, they vowed, of all their troubles. He had in the first instance deceived them with false hopes, and was now using his authority to force Spanish gentlemen to perform the tasks of slaves. So acute became the disorder in the settlement that a number of the insurgents seized one of the vessels lying in the harbour and made off to Spain to carry their accusations against the

Admiral to the authorities there. On their arrival in the mother country they readily gained the ear of Bishop Fonseca, President of the Council of the Indies. This unscrupulous ecclesiastic, whose ability had won him a large measure of the Sovereigns' confidence, had during the preparations for the second voyage been offended by the impatient attitude of Columbus. A difference had arisen between the two men, and Fonseca already cherished against the Admiral an unforgiving resentment which was to result in his throwing henceforth every possible obstacle in his way. He now secured the appointment of a creature of his own as commissioner to inquire into the causes of unrest in Hispaniola and dispatched him across the Atlantic. As soon as this man reached the colony it became clear that his sole concern was to collect evidence that would tell against the administration of Columbus and his brothers. There was only one course to be taken. When the commissioner returned home with his report Columbus got aboard a ship of his own and sailed with him.

The Sovereigns received the great explorer with every mark of undiminished favour. He was perfectly frank. He made no attempt to

disguise the disturbed state of the settlement, but he put the causes of it in a clear light and stated the measures which in his opinion were necessary for curing the evil. By his advice ships were sent to Hispaniola with fresh colonists and a large supply of provisions. He then set about preparing for a fresh voyage of discovery. But his enemies, headed by Fonseca, were always busy, and the royal exchequer was at a low ebb. Two years passed before he was able to start again.

At length, on May 30, 1498, the Admiral sailed with six vessels on his third expedition. From the Cape Verde Islands he steered a still more southerly course than on his last voyage, till he found himself in mid-ocean within five degrees of the Equator. In this latitude the fleet was becalmed. The heat was overpowering, and as the crews lay exhausted about the decks, old strange tales revived in their minds of a zone where the fierce rays of the sun burnt the life out of man and beast. But after a little they worked to the north-west, and soon the trade wind was blowing them on their way again under a cooler sky.

At the end of the second month they sighted land. Three peaks rose out of the sea which,

on a nearer view, were found to spring from a single base. Columbus gave the name of Trinidad to the island of the triple mountain, and passing to the south and west of it, entered the Gulf of Paria. Southward as far as eye could reach extended low-lying land. This Columbus at first took for an island, but the set of the strong current northwards through the gulf pointed to the existence of a river which could only be of continental size, and which he judged must rise in distant mountains probably below the Equator. This was a just inference. He had in fact made his landfall a little north of the delta of the Orinoco. But his imagination did not stop here. The climate was so soft, the vegetation so profuse, the skins of the natives so fair for the inhabitants of Equatorial regions, that he supposed himself to be in the neighbourhood of terrestrial paradise, and concluded that the waters of the great river whose outflow he had detected had their source in the Garden of Eden. He was not equipped, however, for an expedition into so vast an interior; his work lay by sea. He collected from the natives a quantity of the pearls that they gathered in abundance along that coast, and passed on

through the Dragon's Mouth, as he called the narrow, dangerous channel between the mainland and North-west Trinidad. Hence he went on by the shore as far as Margarita, and then proceeded to Hispaniola.

Since Columbus's departure, his brother the Adelantado had founded a new town in the south of the island. It was called San Domingo, and was destined to grow into a large and flourishing city, the capital of Spanish rule in the Indies. But at present the colony was in a state of confusion that amounted to civil war. The disaffected had taken arms, and every effort of the Governor's had failed to bring them to submission. Columbus on his arrival perceived that mere force would never secure the object of restoring order. He therefore took conciliatory measures and won over the chief of the insurgents to his side by pardoning him and reinstating him in his office of Alcalde-Mayor, or Chief Justice. For a time affairs assumed an aspect of something approaching tranquillity, but the embers of discontent continued to smoulder as hot as ever, and the same ship that carried home the Admiral's dispatches reporting his latest discoveries carried also a long list of complaints against him and

his brother. The Spanish Government took a serious view of the matter, and sent out a gentleman of the royal household named Francisco de Bobadilla to supersede Columbus in his office of Viceroy and to investigate the truth of the charges.

Bobadilla was a man of weak character, little judgment, and hasty temper. One of his first acts was to seize Columbus and put him in irons. After this he proceeded to gather any evidence against him that appeared likely to justify the outrage. Columbus fell into the deepest dejection. He was persuaded that the new Governor, acting as the tool of his enemies, would be satisfied with nothing less than his execution. But whatever Bobadilla would have liked to do (and it is not certain that he ever meditated such a crime), he was too well aware of the importance of his prisoner to deny him a hearing in Spain. A vessel was prepared, and one day the officer entrusted with the charge of the Admiral entered his cell and requested him to accompany him to the harbour. Columbus fully believed that he was about to be led to the scaffold. "Villejo," he exclaimed in great agitation, "whither are you taking me?" and it was not till the other had assured him

that his life was in no danger that he recovered his composure. As soon as they were at sea the chivalrous Villejo would have freed his prisoner from his chains. But Columbus would not allow him to do so. He would wear them, he said, till the Sovereigns should order them to be taken off, and he would preserve them afterwards as relics and memorials of the reward of his services.¹

When the vessel reached Spain the Admiral's first act was to write a long and indignant letter to a lady at court with whom he was acquainted. This the latter showed to Isabella, who always had a great respect and admiration for the explorer. Shortly afterwards he appeared in person before the Sovereigns, still wearing his fetters. Throwing himself on his knees, he burst into a storm of tears, and for a time his emotion was so violent that he was unable to utter a word. The King and Queen were visibly moved. They raised him to his feet, assured him of their unfailing regard, and expressed their horror of the treatment to which he had been subjected. They were not alone

¹ His son Fernando said that he afterwards kept them hanging always in his cabinet, and requested that when he died they might be buried with him.

in their attitude towards him. Popular feeling was entirely on his side. Many accusations had been brought against him by his enemies, but for the moment only his great services were remembered. In short, his triumph was complete.

Ferdinand, however, was not the man to allow himself in matters of public policy to be influenced by a generous sentiment. He recognised the merits of the Admiral, and was willing to make him reasonable amends for the wrongs he had suffered; but though he recalled Bobadilla, he had no intention of restoring the Governorship to Columbus. The interests involved were too large. Other explorers were now entering the Western Hemisphere and extending the discoveries already made, and every voyage was revealing the existence of unknown lands of apparently measureless extent. Nor were his own subjects the only visitors to the new world that was rising into view. The English had sailed down the coast for some distance south of Newfoundland. The Portuguese captain Cabral had touched Brazil in his voyage to the East. But more than this, Portugal had reached India at last by the Cape route, and as it was commonly held that the

Spanish discoveries, if they did not form part of the Continent of Asia, were at least adjacent to it, there seemed a possibility of the two nations coming into collision across the globe.¹ Under these circumstances he resolved to organise his new dominions in a number of separate governments under the general supervision of a proconsul seated at San Domingo. For such an office he considered Columbus unfit. The Admiral was not a Spaniard, nor the man to rule Spaniards; the last fact was pretty evident. And the King did not trust him. He seems to have thought that, once firmly established in power so far from home, he

¹ In 1493 Pope Alexander VI issued a Bull in which a line was drawn from the Arctic to the Antarctic Pole running through a meridian 300 miles west of the Azores. All discoveries east of this were to fall to the Portuguese, all west of it to the Spaniards. In the following year the two countries by mutual agreement settled on a new line of demarcation which they fixed 1,110 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. Under this arrangement the shoulder of Brazil went to Portugal. When the two nations came into contact on the opposite side of the globe frequent disputes not unnaturally arose. By an arrangement made in 1529 the boundary between their possessions in the Far East was put at 17 degrees east of the Moluccas, the Spanish sphere extending eastwards, the Portuguese westward, of that meridian. This allowed Portugal to retain the Spice Islands, but gave the Philippines to Spain.

might possibly seek to throw off his allegiance and found an empire of his own. Accordingly the Viceroy's petition to be reinstated in power was constantly evaded, and on Bobadilla's return a new Governor of Hispaniola was appointed, a courtier of considerable talents and experience named Nicholas de Ovando.

Columbus, finding that there was no immediate prospect of his being permitted to resume the government, begged to be entrusted with the command of another exploring expedition. Here he could still be of use, and Ferdinand granted his request. With four small caravels, the largest not above seventy tons, he sailed from Cadiz in May 1502, being now about fifty-six years of age. His object was to discover the strait which he supposed led from the islands into the Indian Ocean. He had already explored the southern coast of Cuba on the one side, and much of the coast of Caracas on the other, and somewhere between the two he felt sure the long-sought opening must lie. The Sovereigns had written him a friendly letter, enjoining him not to visit Hispaniola, where they feared his presence might be the signal for fresh disturbances. But on the voyage across one of his ships proved slow and

unhandy, and after touching at Martinique, he decided that the necessity of exchanging her for another vessel justified his disobeying the order. When he reached San Domingo he was not allowed to enter the harbour. This was mortifying, but he submitted with a good grace and, anxious to give proof of his friendly intentions, endeavoured to render the Governor a service. A considerable fleet was on the point of departing for Spain. Columbus, who had a large experience of West Indian weather conditions, foresaw the approach of a hurricane. He sent Ovando warning and advised him to keep his ships for the present safe in harbour. Ovando ordered the fleet to sea. Almost immediately the greater part of it was destroyed by a furious storm.¹

Leaving Hispaniola, the Admiral sailed to Cuba, whence he stood south-west till he came to the coast of Honduras. The natives were friendly. They used copper utensils and wore clothing of dyed cotton. Here the explorers saw for the first time the peccary and monkeys with prehensile tails. They were given to understand that to the west lay a

¹ Bobadilla, Columbus's old enemy, was in one of the ships and went to the bottom with her. Poetic justice.

rich and populous country whose inhabitants were familiar with many of the arts of civilisation.¹ Columbus's thoughts immediately flew to Cathay, and he pressed southwards to find the strait which he was convinced could not be far distant. But his search was in vain. All along the coast he went from northern Honduras to the Gulf of Darien, till he arrived at a point already reached from the east by another explorer named Bastidas. Here he had to give up. His ships were crazy and half disabled from struggling against contrary winds and conflicting currents. The natives had for the most part proved hostile, and several of the Spaniards had lost their lives in an attempt to found a settlement on the shores of Veragua. The Admiral himself was so reduced by fatigue of body and mind that he could scarcely crawl out of his cabin. Had it not been for the energy of his brother the Adelantado, not one of them would have survived the voyage.

As they sailed north for Cuba a storm took them, and to avoid foundering they had to run the ships ashore at Jamaica. Here they remained for over a year, the Admiral for a great part of the time prostrated by sickness

¹ Mexico, no doubt.

on board the wrecks, and many of his followers wandering in a state of open mutiny about the island, against the inhabitants of which they committed all sorts of excesses. At length two ships arrived from Hispaniola grudgingly dispatched by Ovando, who for months past had been aware of the plight of his fellow-countrymen, but had made no effort to come to their assistance.

At San Domingo Columbus was received by the Governor with a studied courtesy and respect that only served to throw a thin veil over the latter's real attitude of jealous hostility; As soon as the explorer's health was sufficiently recovered he sailed for Spain, and arrived there in November 1504. He immediately began to petition Ferdinand for the restitution of the powers conferred on him by the original articles signed in 1492. But if his suit was hopeless before, it was doubly so now. His best friend, the Queen, had lately died. The King, always a stranger to gratitude, had no further use for the servant to whom he owed so much. Columbus, too, had incurred the enmity of a powerful party at court, and he had scarcely any money left. No direct repudiation of his claims was made, but evasion followed

evasion. Nothing more was necessary ; it was just a matter of exercising a little patience till death should end the old man's importunity. On May 20, 1506, Columbus died in poverty in the city of Valladolid, having urged his claims to the last. In his will he impressed upon his son Diego the duty of securing the concessions to which, as his heir, he would be entitled from the Crown of Spain, and ordered that through each succeeding generation the head of the family should sign himself simply "The Admiral," and thus preserve the memory of the founder of his line.

The offices which had been denied to Columbus were afterwards bestowed, with some modifications, on Diego, who married a niece of the Duke of Alva, and by this alliance gained the influence necessary to establish his rights. Don Luis, Diego's son, waived his claim to the Viceroyalty of the Indies, and accepted the titles of Duke of Veragua and Marquis of Jamaica. The dignities of "The Admiral" finally passed to a branch of the house of Braganza.

Columbus's body was first buried in the Church of Santa Maria in Valladolid, but afterwards removed to Seville. In 1536 it was taken

to Hispaniola and placed in a tomb near the high altar in the Cathedral of San Domingo. Here it remained till the island was ceded to the French in 1795, when it was received by the Cathedral of Havana. After the loss of Cuba in the Spanish-American War of 1898 it found its final resting-place in Seville Cathedral.

CHAPTER VIII

CENTRAL AMERICA : DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC

SPAIN never bred successful colonists ; rulers and people alike were too selfish and too short-sighted. But during the years of her conquest of the Indies, Central America, Mexico and Peru she poured from her harbours a stream of as daring and resolute adventurers as ever set a sail or drew a sword. Not of this type were all the farers to the West. Some went out as genuine settlers ; some sought just to snatch quick wealth and return to the enjoyment of it in their own country. But the conquerors who “ gave the King of Spain more provinces than his ancestors had left him towns ” ¹ were of another stamp. These men were not disinterested ; they ran with the rest in the race for gold. But they loved adventure for adventure’s sake. They laughed

¹ A boast said to have been made by Cortes to the Emperor Charles V.

at danger, to hardship they were indifferent. No undertaking was too desperate for their liking. In their little ships, often ill-found and always quickly riddled by sea worms as thick as a man's finger, they fought the hurricane storms that periodically sweep West Indian waters. Ashore they faced long marches through dense forests and quaking bogs, or scaled the rocks and precipices of untrodden heights, their bodies now sweating under the intolerable lowland sun, now numbed by the cold winds that beat about the mountain fields of eternal snow.

Among them all there was never one of a more reckless courage than the cavalier Alonzo de Ojeda. A small, compact man of great strength, he had been trained to arms in the household of the Duke of Medina Celi, had early attracted attention by his hare-brained exploits, and during the Moorish wars had gained distinction as a brave and resourceful leader. Ojeda accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, and rendered important services in the course of the troubles that arose in Hispaniola. On one occasion, by a clever stratagem, he seized and carried off single-handed from the midst of his tribesmen a savage and powerful

Carib cacique of the interior and brought him, bound hand and foot, to the town of Isabella. He was back in Spain when the Admiral, on his third voyage, sent home glowing accounts of the discoveries he was making, and in particular of the shores of Paria, so rich in pearls. Ojeda immediately determined to undertake an expedition of his own to those quarters, and as he stood in high favour with the Bishop Fonseca, who saw here a chance of doing Columbus an ill turn, his project gained a ready sanction from the court. He fitted out four ships, and after making the American continent a little above the Equator, examined the coast northwards and westwards as far as Cape Vela, whence he sailed to Hispaniola. The date of the voyage, 1499, is of some importance, as it disposes of the claim of Amerigo Vespucci to be reckoned the discoverer of America proper. Amerigo may or may not have accompanied the Admiral on the voyage of 1492, but the earliest authentic mention of his presence in Spain occurs in 1495, and he certainly did not visit the mainland till he went with Ojeda as pilot a full year after Columbus had traced a good deal of the northern outline of Central and South America.

Other voyages followed. The first navigator to cross the Equator in the Western Ocean was Vicente Yañez Pinzon, one of the brothers who figured so largely in the Admiral's first venture. Sailing from Palos in December 1499, he discovered the coast of Brazil in eight degrees of south latitude, and proceeding north-west, explored the mouths of the Amazon, where he found fresh water many leagues out at sea. The voyage, though it resulted in the discovery of 1,200 miles of coast, was an unfortunate business and brought Pinzon no profit. He carried home the first opossum seen in Europe. Next year Rodrigo de Bastidas pushed west beyond Cape Vela, Ojeda's farthest point, past the Magdalena river and the Gulf of Darien to Puerto del Retrete, in ten degrees of north latitude. It was this same haven which a few months later marked the eastern limit of Columbus's fourth voyage. Thus by 1502 the coast-line had been explored from Honduras to beyond the north-eastern shoulder of Brazil.

It was Ferdinand's policy to confer the government of large tracts of country, in return for a substantial share in the profits to be drawn from the soil and the natives, on any individual who gave promise of being able to win and hold

a footing for Spain in those wild regions. After an unsuccessful attempt to plant a colony in the Gulf of Maracaibo, Ojeda was induced in 1509 to try again by the grant of a territory which extended from Cape Vela to the middle of the Gulf of Darien. His first effort on this expedition was to found a settlement at Carthagena, destined to become in later years the site of the chief city of the Main. But the hostility of the natives forced the Spaniards for the present to abandon the spot. A fresh attempt farther south, at S. Sebastian, met with little better fortune. Finally Ojeda returned to Hispaniola to collect reinforcements, leaving a number of his followers behind him under the command of his lieutenant, Francisco Pizarro, with promises of as speedy assistance as he could bring them. On his arrival at San Domingo he found that a ship had sailed after him some time previously with fresh supplies and men, but that nothing had been heard of her since her departure. He strove desperately to enlist more colonists for the adventure. But the people had lost faith in him, and soon afterwards he fell sick and died, so poor as not to leave sufficient money for his burial.

Meanwhile, during Ojeda's absence from the

Main, the vessel carrying reinforcements had proceeded to Carthagena, and after leaving that harbour had picked up the S. Sebastian colonists and gone on to the southern extremity of the Gulf of Darien. Here a rough fort was built and a settlement started which received the high-sounding name of Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darien. In a little while the colonists were joined by a number of their fellow-countrymen who had already endeavoured without success to establish themselves on the shore of the Isthmus at Nombre de Dios, a short distance to the west.

The Darien settlement was now nominally under the command of a lawyer of San Domingo, the Bachelor Enciso, who had manned and equipped the relief ship at his own expense. But his authority was to be short-lived. Among the colonists was a man named Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, who, to escape his creditors in Hispaniola, had joined the expedition by the device of smuggling himself aboard in an empty cask. By sheer force of character Balboa acquired an ascendancy over his companions which soon enabled him to oust the Bachelor from his office of Alcalde-Mayor, or Chief Magistrate. Enciso did not submit without a struggle, but

he was no favourite with his followers, and before long he found himself put on board a small vessel and returning to Hispaniola, with permission to obtain from the authorities there or elsewhere what reparation for his injuries he could get. He lost no time in proceeding to Spain and laying his complaints before the Government.

With a free hand to do as he would, Balboa prepared to set about the execution of the designs on which his mind was bent. He was thirty-five years of age, tall and athletic in build, red-haired, with an open countenance, frank, engaging manners, and a spirit that shrank neither from hardship nor from danger. Yet behind his boldness lay a cool, wise brain, and he was one of the few Spaniards who recognised the importance of securing the friendship of the natives by treating them as something more than the wild beasts of the forests. His first efforts were devoted to organising the life of the colony and ascertaining what districts gave the greatest promise of yielding a supply of the precious metals. Gold, he knew well, was the passport to the favour of the King in Spain. Some of the caciques who owned territories in the neighbourhood were princes of considerable

importance. One not far away commanded a fighting force of 3,000 Indians, and lived in a wooden house 150 yards long, surrounded by a stone wall. His store-rooms were packed with provisions—bread and venison and jars of a spirit extracted from maize. In a secret apartment he preserved the bodies of his ancestors, first dried by the fire, and afterwards decked with precious ornaments and hung from the rafters by ropes of cotton. It was while on a friendly visit to this chief that Balboa conceived the project the accomplishment of which has preserved the memory of his name. The cacique's eldest son soon saw that what the strangers coveted above all else was gold. He presented Balboa with 4,000 ounces. The Spanish commander set aside one-fifth for the Crown and ordered the rest to be divided among his men. As it was being weighed out some of them began to quarrel fiercely about their shares. The young Indian, though he despised their greed, perceived an opportunity of still more firmly securing their goodwill. If the yellow metal was so precious to them, he said, he would tell them of a region where they might have as much of it as they wanted. Beyond the mountains to the south was a sea on which

sailed ships as large as their own. All the rivers there ran over beds of gold ; in golden dishes and cups the kings of those lands were served with their daily meat and drink. At the same time he warned his guests that the route to that country crossed the territories of many caciques who would be certain to oppose them with all the forces at their disposal, while the mountain slopes on both sides swarmed with cannibal tribes. To win through all the dangers that lay ahead it would be necessary to raise a force of at least a thousand men.

Balboa listened with eager interest to the young chieftain's words. To his mind they bore the stamp of truth. He determined to cross the distant heights and descend to that farther tide never yet cut by European keel.

Soon after his return to Darien he received a commission signed by the royal treasurer of Hispaniola appointing him Captain-General of the settlement ; but this dignity was conferred upon him solely on the authority of the Viceroy Don Diego Columbus, and about the same time he heard that the Bachelor Enciso had succeeded in gaining the King's ear in Spain, and that the ruler of Darien would shortly be summoned

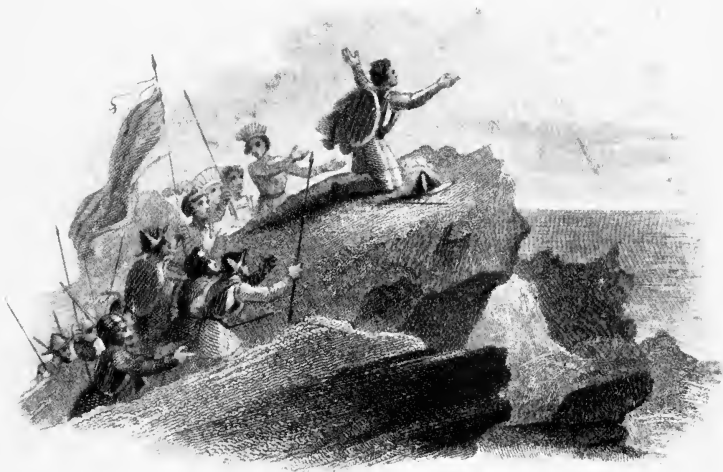
to defend himself against a charge of having usurped the government of the settlement. Everything depended on the achievement of some brilliant feat which should eclipse in the King's mind the memory of his past misdoings. Without waiting for reinforcements, he chose 190 of his most resolute and devoted men, and with these and a number of Indian auxiliaries set out, in the beginning of September 1513, on his march to the Pacific Coast.

The route lay at first through the territories of friendly caciques, but before long they had to fight the hostile tribes of the interior. In these battles great assistance was rendered them by their pack of bloodhounds, animals which the Indians always held in the greatest dread.¹ The character of the country was difficult in the extreme. The undergrowth of the lower woods proved almost impenetrable; constant chasms impeded their progress; and in order to cross the swift deep torrents they had to construct rafts out of timber hewn from the forest trees. By the time they approached

¹ Balboa owned a favourite hound of this breed called Leoncico. He was enormously strong, dull yellow in colour, and covered with battle scars. As a fighting dog Leoncico received a soldier's share of any booty taken. From first to last his owner was the gainer by him of over 1,000 crowns.

the summit of the mountains only sixty-seven of the Spaniards were in a fit condition to struggle forward. By September 26 they had reached the final stage of their upward march. Only the bare mountain peak was left to scale. They set out at daybreak, every man pressing impatiently forward to catch the first sight of the promised ocean. But as they neared the goal Balboa called a halt and ordered his companions to wait. Then he hurried on alone. When at last he stood upon the crest, the prospect that burst upon his view might well have stirred a duller heart than his. Below him stretched a dark expanse of rock and forest, broken here and there by the tumbling silver of mountain streams. Farther off the grasses of the green savannah waved. And beyond all, a blue stillness beneath the dawn, lay the waters of that great flood whose embrace clasps half a world.

After he had gazed for a little while on the splendid panorama, Balboa called his men to join him, and when they were all gathered on the height they knelt down and sang together the *Te Deum laudamus*. Then, having set up a lofty cross and raised as a monument a pile of stones, the explorers prepared to face



BALBOA DISCOVERING THE PACIFIC
From an old engraving

the difficulties that lay between them and the distant sea. They had gone but a little way when they entered the boundaries of a cacique who tried to stay their advance. A single volley from the arquebuses, however, was sufficient to strike terror into his dusky warriors, who turned and fled, pursued by the bloodhounds. After this the cacique submitted, made the invaders a present of a large quantity of gold, and ended by becoming one of the firmest of their allies. Balboa remained in the village for some days, then, leaving the sick there to recruit their strength, he pushed on with twenty-six Spaniards and a train of Indian guides and bearers.

On S. Michael's day they reached a vast inlet of the sea. The tide was out and a stretch of mud two miles wide fringed the shore. Balboa seated himself under a tree and waited till high water. As the tide came pouring in he took his sword in one hand, and in the other a banner painted with figures of the Madonna and her Son, and striding into the waves, proclaimed his Sovereign's dominion over all the shores washed by the new-found sea.

Taking up their quarters in a native village, the Spaniards endeavoured to discover some-

thing of the character of the coast they had reached. Their first venture in Indian canoes nearly cost them their lives, as they were caught in a sudden storm and only just succeeded in getting back to land. But at the end of October Balboa procured a large boat made out of the trunk of a single tree, and propelled by a number of Indians who wielded paddles with pearl-studded handles. In this he went to the mouth of the gulf on which the village was situated, and saw on the horizon an archipelago of islands where the natives assured him it was a common thing to find pearls the size of a man's eye in shell-fish as big as bucklers. He named them the Pearl Islands, but judged it wiser to make no attempt to reach them in an open canoe. He was also told that the coast, after running some way to the west, continued southwards without end past the territories of a people immensely rich, who used quadrupeds as beasts of burden.¹

A little later the explorers set out for home. Their march back over the mountains was toilsome in the extreme, and they were all suffering from the constant hardships to which they had so long been exposed. Balboa him-

¹ The llama.

self fell ill of a fever, and had to be carried a considerable distance in an improvised litter. But at length they got back to Darien, accompanied by their Indian allies bearing a large amount of gold and pearls.

Balboa's first action was to dispatch a trusty friend to Spain with the royal fifth of the treasure, an additional present to the King of some specially fine pearls, and a letter giving an account of the new discovery. Unfortunately the vessel in which the messenger sailed was delayed on the voyage, and when it got to Spain an expedition had left that country a few days previously, manned by over 2,000 adventurers under the command of Don Pedrarias Davila, a soldier of some mark who had been given the rule of the colony at Darien. Enciso had turned the tables on Balboa. On his arrival home he had trumpeted abroad his own wrongs and the misdoings of his rival to such a purpose that Ferdinand had become convinced that the present Governor was little short of a criminal. Pedrarias had accordingly been appointed to supersede him, with strict orders to bring him to book for his evil deeds. The news of the discovery of the Pacific caused the King to change his mind. But it

was then too late to recall Pedrarias, already well on his way.

The appointment of the new Governor was a blow to the hopes of Balboa, but he welcomed him with dignity and made no difficulty about surrendering to him the reins of office. Pedrarias almost immediately caused him to be arrested on a charge of usurping the government and acting tyrannously towards the settlers. To his surprise and annoyance, however, the prisoner was acquitted by the court set up to try him, and directly afterwards letters came from the King appointing Balboa Adelantado of the colony. The Governor was deeply mortified. He complied with the royal command to admit his predecessor to a share of power, but resolved that as soon as possible he would rid himself of one whose ability stood in such marked contrast to his own unfitness to administer the colony. Affairs were already falling into confusion. Food was growing scarce, and relations with the Indians had undergone a change. Pedrarias, a man of weak and violent disposition, harsh and merciless and without any settled policy to guide him, soon found himself at loggerheads with the surrounding tribes. The Spaniards suffered more than one

defeat at the hands of savages who were beginning to lose the fear and admiration with which they had regarded them while Balboa was in command.

For the present the Governor disguised his enmity and authorised his lieutenant to proceed to Acla, a half-built township some miles to the west of Darien. Here, having completed the construction of the houses already commenced, Balboa was to put into execution a scheme which he had for some time had in mind. This was nothing less than to fell and shape on the coast timbers for four brigantines, and then to carry the parts, together with all the necessary rigging, sails, and ironwork, across the mountains and set up his ships on the Pacific shore. For the accomplishment of the extremely difficult task the Adelantado had the assistance of several Spaniards, thirty Negroes, and a considerable number of Indians. Before long all was in readiness for the march across the Isthmus. They had no beasts to help them; everything had to be carried on the backs of the men. The route lay through sixty miles of nearly impassable country. Before the summit of the mountain ridge was gained many of the Indians had died of their labours. But

the rest, with the Spaniards and the Negroes, struggled on and reached the banks of the Balsas river, from which they could float their vessels to the sea. Here they began to put them together. But to their intense disappointment the timbers proved valueless. They had been cut too near the salt water and were already worm-eaten. But Balboa was not the man to give up. They went back again and cut a fresh supply, enough to build two brigantines. And in the end they set up their small ships and sailed out into the Pacific.

With this achievement Balboa touched the zenith of his career. But in his very hour of triumph Destiny laid her hand upon his shoulder and pulled him down. The jealous Pedrarias lent his ear to a tale that the Adelantado was plotting to throw off his authority and establish an independent command on the southern coast. He wrote him a letter requesting him to meet him at Acla to discuss matters of importance to the colony. Balboa, never suspecting treachery, did as he was asked and on his arrival at the township was immediately arrested. A formal charge was then preferred against him of treasonably conspiring to renounce his allegiance to the Crown. The prisoner's indignant

denials were scarcely heeded, the trial was quickly carried through, and a little later Balboa, with several of his followers, was publicly executed in the market-place of Acla. So died, in the forty-third year of his age, the first Spaniard to reach the Pacific and launch a European ship upon its waters.

CHAPTER IX

MAGELLAN'S VOYAGE

THE hope had never been abandoned of finding a strait which should lead Spanish ships into the "Indian Sea." The new-found countries were well enough in their way, but they had, it seemed, no riches to yield which could compare with those of the East. In 1507 a council had been summoned of the ablest navigators in Spain, including Yañez Pinzon and Amerigo Vespucci, who on the death of Columbus had been promoted by the King to the position of chief pilot. At that conclave it had been unanimously decided that the only chance of finding the desired waterway was by searching the shores of Brazil in a southerly direction. Accordingly in 1508 Pinzon and Solis, the latter also a navigator of great experience, were sent out, and succeeded in surveying the coast for a considerable distance below Cape S. Augustin. Six years later Solis, now himself chief pilot, went again.

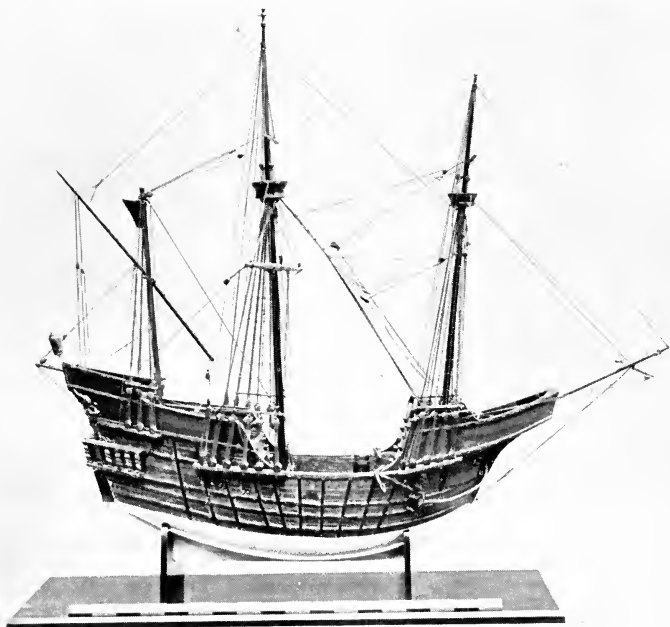
Balboa, in Darien, had just discovered the Pacific, and Solis's orders were to circumnavigate the continent till he reached the south side of the Isthmus. Commencing his survey at Cape S. Augustin, he went along the shore, marking as accurately as his instruments allowed the position of every headland he encountered. After a time he came to a great westward opening which he named the *Mar Dulce*, from the sweetness of the water. This was the mouth of the Plate river. Solis entered the gulf and went on shore with some of his men, but soon after landing the party were attacked by the natives. The commander and five others were captured, clubbed, roasted, and eaten by the savages before the very eyes of the Spaniards who had remained on shipboard. These, their leader lost, had no heart to continue the voyage. They turned their ships and sailed home.

The discovery of the passage "to the East by the West" was not, however, to be delayed much longer. About this time considerable doubt existed as to whether the Moluccas lay within the Portuguese or the Spanish sphere, but as the Portuguese were rapidly pushing their way through the East Indies, it seemed

probable that before long the question would be settled in their favour by actual conquest. In 1519 Fernando Magalhaes, or Magellan, volunteered to take a Spanish fleet to the Moluccas by way of the Atlantic and South America.

Magellan was a native of Portugal. He had always been a fighting man. In the wars with the Moors of North Africa he had got a wound which had left him lame for life. Afterwards he had served in the East Indies, and had been present at the siege of Malacca. But the King of Portugal had failed to recognise his merits, and finally, on the secret invitation of Charles I of Spain, he had come to the latter's court at Valladolid, and was now in the employment of the Spanish Crown. The Government accepted the offer of this experienced captain, and five ships were fitted out for him, two of 130 tons and three of 90 tons. Magellan flew his flag in the *Trinidad*, one of the larger vessels.

They set out from San Lucar on September 20, 1519, and in due course reached the coast of Brazil. By the following April they were in nearly 50 degrees of south latitude. At this point, as winter was approaching, Magellan decided to put into some safe an-



PORTUGUESE CARRACK, FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Vessels of this type were developed at Genoa, and afterwards used by the Portuguese and Spaniards in their voyages of exploration

chorage and proceed no farther for the present. He found the harbour he wanted in Port S. Julian, and there, in that far-away haven, the crews settled down to a monotonous existence till the spring should come round again. The common seamen, the rank and file of the adventurers, who throughout the voyage displayed an implicit confidence in their commander, never questioned Magellan's wisdom or his authority ; but before long his fellow-captains began to grumble. In order to husband the stock of provisions, every man for the time being had to go on short rations. There were other hardships too in plenty to be faced in that rigorous climate. Soon the captains demanded an immediate return to Spain. Magellan refused. They broke into open mutiny. He caused one of them to be treacherously stabbed, executed another, and set a third on shore to die of starvation or at the hands of the savages. Violence and murder ; but there was nothing for it but to strike hard and strike at once ; and Magellan had been bred in a school where men's lives were the commonest stake on the board. After that he had no more trouble from mutineers.

The fleet was a long time at Port S. Julian

before any natives were seen. Then one day a naked giant appeared on the beach, singing and dancing and sprinkling dust upon his head. A sailor was sent on shore with instructions to imitate all the savage's actions. Charmed with such a delicate attention, the latter was easily persuaded to venture on board Magellan's vessel, and friendly relations were soon established. The chronicler of the voyage describes him as "so tall that our heads scarcely reached his waist, and his voice was like that of a bull." Others of the inhabitants now visited the ships. One was taught to recite the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was baptised by the name of Juan Gigante. These people had domesticated a kind of llama, which according to the Spanish account must have presented a curious appearance. It had, they said, the head and ears of a mule, the body of a camel, the legs of a stag, and the tail of a horse. The natives wore shoes made of its skin, but so badly constructed that their feet resembled those of the animal itself. Magellan accordingly nicknamed them Patagones, a word meaning in Spanish "clumsy-hoofed."

In October 1520 the expedition left the harbour, and soon afterwards reached the strait

to which Magellan has given his name. The passage was 450 miles in length and beset with many difficulties. In some parts the mountains rose so high that they seemed to touch the heavens and completely shut out the sun's rays from the sea. Their sides were covered with snow which never melted and was of a bluish tinge. Yet where the sun struck the lower ground trees were abundant. As the voyagers wound their way through they saw fires on the land to the south, and from this circumstance called it *Tierra del Fuego*. One of the ships had been wrecked shortly after leaving Port S. Julian, and a second parted company among the islands of the strait and sailed home again. The other three, however, were relentlessly held to the enterprise by Magellan, who by way of encouraging his followers swore that they should eat the chafing-mats on the rigging before he would let them return. At last, after thirty-seven days in the channel, they came into the great Southern sea.

The longest stretch of the voyage was now before them—how long they could only vaguely guess. Nor had they to navigate at the start calm waters like those which wash farther north

the coasts of Upper Chile and Peru.¹ But with Magellan there was never a thought of turning back. As soon as might be after clearing the strait, the *Trinidad* and her two consorts stood out into the ocean. For thirteen months and twenty days they sailed. On the way to the East Indies land was only sighted once, two islands so lonely and desolate that Magellan named them the Unhappy Isles.

At length they reached the Philippines. Here the native ruler of one of the islands gave them a friendly welcome, acknowledged himself the vassal of the King of Spain, and was converted to Christianity. He also entreated the Spaniards' aid against a neighbouring prince with whom he was at feud. Magellan consented to assist him, and took the field with a body of his followers. No sooner, however, had they entered the enemy's country than they were surrounded by hordes of the islanders armed with stones and clubs. For a whole day the Spaniards defended themselves with desperate bravery, but when their ammunition gave out they were forced to retire. At the outset of the retreat Magellan

¹ Hence the name Pacific, given to the Western Ocean by an American cacique a few years before the date of this voyage.

was twice struck by two large stones, the first stunning him and the second breaking his thigh. He fell to the ground, and was immediately dispatched by the enemy with their clubs.

On the Spaniards' return from this rash adventure, their ally, when he found that their leader had been killed, renounced his new religion and treacherously put to death all those of his visitors who were not on board the ships. The survivors, much reduced in number, burnt one of their three vessels, and in the other two, the *Trinidad* and the *Victoria*, set off to find the Moluccas. After a time, having touched at more than one point of Borneo and passed east of Celebes, they arrived at Tidore, with the king of which island they became very good friends. Here the *Trinidad* stayed awhile for such repairs as they could give her, and subsequently made an attempt to recross the Pacific to America. But the winds proved contrary, and she was badly strained. Before long she had to put back to the Moluccas, which she just managed to reach without sinking. Her crew were taken prisoners by the Portuguese.

In the meantime the *Victoria*, commanded by Sebastian del Cano, a young Basque pilot from

the shores of the Bay of Biscay, had started for home by the westward route. Steering well to the south of Java, she sailed nearly parallel with the Australian coast till she was a little north of the 40th degree of south latitude. Then, turning due west, she rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and finally arrived at San Lucar on September 6,¹ 1522, after a voyage lasting three years all but fourteen days.

Magellan's exploit in rounding South America and crossing the Pacific must be reckoned the greatest of geographical discoveries next to that of Columbus in finding land beyond the Atlantic. Exploration in America, both before and after the voyage of circumnavigation, was of immense importance in unfolding the character of district after district of the King of Spain's new dominions ; but Magellan's achievement has a larger issue. By revealing the vastness of the ocean that lay between the shores of Asia and America, hitherto supposed to be

¹ When del Cano reached home he was surprised to find that he had lost a day in his reckoning. According to his calculations he entered port on the 5th, not the 6th, of September. Many theories were advanced to explain the discrepancy, but it was not till some time had elapsed that the true reason, which the reader will have already perceived, was discovered.

nearly adjacent to each other, it settled for all practical purposes the extent of the globe from East to West, and taught men to regard the recent discoveries in their true light, as a huge continent rising in the midst of waters so vast as to isolate it completely from all known lands. In itself the greatest feat of seamanship ever accomplished, the voyage served to emphasise the supreme importance of what Columbus had unwittingly done in bringing to the knowledge of humanity a land mass which was now for the first time clearly seen to be nothing less than a new world.

CHAPTER X

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

WHILE the Spaniards were in the face of great difficulties establishing themselves in Central America, they were also pushing forward exploration in other quarters of the West. The smaller islands, which offered few incentives to settlement, did not attract them, but before long they had mastered the group which comprises Hispaniola, Jamaica, Porto Rico, and Cuba ; and from the latter it was natural enough that their next step should be taken in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico. In 1512 Juan Ponce de León, conqueror and Governor of Porto Rico, a man past middle age, fitted out three ships to go in search of the fountain of perpetual youth, which according to the Indian fables was situated in an island at no great distance to the north of Cuba. The stout old soldier failed to find the rejuvenating spring, but presently came on land which, as it was discovered on Easter Day,

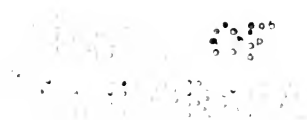
he called Florida.¹ The natives were so hostile and so numerous that no settlement could be made on the coast. Yet the voyage was not without its value. Ponce de Leon noticed the strong easterly current that ran by the shore there, and the Spaniards thus learnt the advantage of sailing northwards through the Bahama Strait as they returned from the Indies to Europe. In 1517 and 1518 two expeditions were made due west from Cuba, the second commanded by Juán de Grijalva. This navigator, starting from Havana, explored the northern coast of Yucatan, penetrated into the Gulf of Campeachy, and made his way north and west as far as Tampico. From this point he returned with wonderful stories of the lands past which he had sailed. The natives were friendly and disposed to trade. There was an abundance of the precious metals; at one point a cacique had presented him with a complete suit of armour of hammered gold. Everywhere the people lived, not in rude huts, but in houses of white stone. There were rumours, too, of a nation inhabiting the interior, civilised, formidable in war, and richer far than their neighbours of the coast. Grijalva was so captivated

¹ Pasqua Florida = Easter Day.

by the beauty and the promise of the country he had visited that he christened the district New Spain. In the following year the circuit of the gulf was completed by four vessels which sailed to Florida, and thence round the coast to where now stands Vera Cruz.

On Grijalva's return from exploring the coast of Mexico, Velasquez, Governor of Cuba, began immediately to equip an expedition for the conquest of a country of which such favourable reports had come to his ears. To the command of this Grijalva naturally enough considered that he had some claim. But the Governor was of too jealous a temper to give it to one who had already achieved distinction, and after a good deal of hesitation he finally selected another man for the honour.

Hernando Cortes was at this time thirty-four years of age. He was a native of Estremadura in Spain, and came of a noble but impoverished family. Educated for the Bar, he soon made up his mind that the only life for which he had any inclination was a life of action, and he resolved to try his fortune in the Italian wars. Sickness prevented his carrying out this intention. In 1504 he went over to Hispaniola, where his relative, the





HERNANDO CORTES, CONQUEROR OF MEXICO

After the original painting executed about six years before the death of Cortes

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO 185

Governor Ovando, received him kindly. On Ojeda's sailing for Carthagena in 1509, Cortes was eager to join the ranks of the adventurers to the mainland. But again he fell ill and was balked of his desire. Two years later he accompanied Velasquez in the expedition which effected a settlement in Cuba. Velasquez was not long in recognising his ability, and though a quarrel at one time arose between the two in which Cortes came near to losing his life, he finally entrusted him with the command of the armament preparing for the Gulf, which comprised ten ships, 680 men, sixteen horses, and fourteen pieces of artillery. With his customary weakness, however, the Governor had no sooner taken the step than he repented of it, and it was only by hurrying on his preparations and putting to sea before he could be stopped that Cortes was able to retain his appointment.

The Spaniards disembarked on the coast of Mexico in April, 1519, and mounted a small battery of guns on some sandhills which commanded their encampment. Two days later an ambassador arrived from the Aztec Emperor, Montezuma. Cortes informed the chief that he was the servant of a monarch who ruled over

an immense empire beyond the seas, and who, having heard of the greatness of the Mexican prince, wished to enter into communication with him. His master, he said, had entrusted him with a present for Montezuma, and a message which he had ordered him to deliver in person. When could he be admitted into the royal presence? The Aztec noble in reply expressed surprise that the Spaniards should demand to see the Emperor so soon after their arrival, but said that he would forward Cortes' gift to Montezuma and ascertain what might be the latter's wishes in the matter. Presents were then exchanged on both sides and the Indian withdrew. The interview was carried on through the medium of two interpreters, one of them a native girl named by the Spaniards Marina, who attached herself to Cortes' fortunes and became his secretary and constant companion. In the course of it Cortes noticed an Indian attendant of the ambassador's busy sketching with a pencil, and on examining his work, found that he was making rapid drawings of every person and object within his view, for the purpose of giving the Emperor an idea of the appearance of the visitors and their surroundings. The Aztecs had no alphabet, but by means of this

picture writing their artist-scribes were able to convey a wonderfully faithful and vivid impression of any scene at which they happened to be assisting.

After the envoy's departure Cortes immediately began to build a town to which he gave the name of Villa Rica. His next step was characteristic of the spirit in which he approached his enterprise. He burnt his ships as they lay at anchor. Meanwhile he was busily gaining all the intelligence he could of the country he had come to conquer. The empire of the Aztec Emperor Montezuma stretched from sea to sea, and included the territories of thirty subject caciques. It had been in existence for 130 years, and was strong and well organised. The people were fierce and warlike, their military forces so large that they could put an army of 200,000 warriors into the field. This overwhelming strength was, however, more apparent than real. Brave as the Indians were reputed to be, Cortes knew that they were unacquainted with the use of firearms, while the horses he had brought were in themselves objects of wonder and terror to a people who had never seen such animals. Again, though outwardly impressive, the Aztec

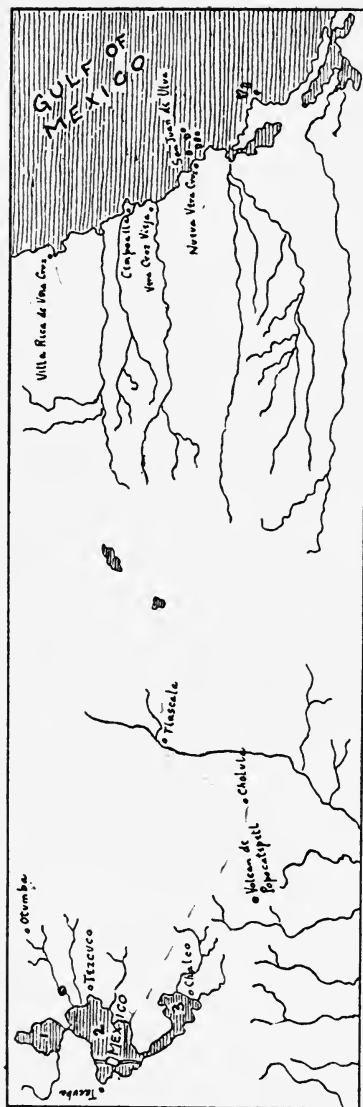
empire was politically unsound. In its dealings with its vassals the dominant race displayed a harshness that kept them all in a state of simmering resentment. The tribute levied by Montezuma from the subject caciques was a heavy one, and the slightest sign of disaffection brought instant retribution in the shape of hordes of his warriors, who dragged away every prisoner they could catch alive, to be sacrificed to the gloomy gods who reigned in their capital of Tenochtitlan. There was another circumstance, too, which was likely to operate strongly in favour of the Spaniards. From their first appearance in the country they were taken by many of the natives to be the children of a gentle, fair-skinned god who had once dwelt in the land, and after instructing the people in the arts of peace, had sailed out into the waters of the Gulf, promising that one day his descendants should return to take them beneath their protection. Still, with no more than half a thousand men at his back it may well have seemed madness in Cortes to contemplate the conquest—he was bent on nothing less—of a country so extensive and so populous as that which lay before him.

Having made some headway with the build-

ing of his town and cut off his followers from all present possibility of retreating home, Cortes, on August 16, 1519, started his march into the interior with about 400 foot, fifteen horse, seven pieces of cannon, 1,300 Indian troops, and 1,000 native porters to carry the baggage and drag the guns. These auxiliaries he obtained from the cacique of Cempoalla, a town on the coast at a little distance to the north. For the first few days their route lay through the *tierra caliente*, gay with flowering meadow, stream, and forest. But as they advanced they climbed steadily to higher ground clothed with less luxuriant vegetation, and soon they had reached an elevation of 7,000 feet above sea-level. Suddenly, as they were making their way through a wild mountain valley, they were brought up by a curious obstacle in the shape of a stone wall nine feet high and twenty feet thick, with a parapet on the top for the protection of its defenders. This barrier extended to a length of six miles, and was built up at each end into the face of the high, rocky cliffs which shut in the valley on either side. It had one opening only, in the centre. Beyond it lay the territory of the Tlascalans, who had raised it as a fortification against the inroads of the Mexicans.

The people of Tlascala were a branch of the Anahuac race which had entered the country at the close of the twelfth century. They had formerly lived near the lakes on which the Mexican capital stood, but having quarrelled with their neighbours, had migrated eastwards, and were now settled in a lofty valley some thirty miles in length by forty-five in breadth, shut in on all sides but one by impassable mountain barriers. With these hardy men of the uplands Montezuma had for long waged perpetual war, but he had never succeeded in reducing them to vassalage. Nor were they prepared to submit to Cortes without a struggle.

Owing to an oversight on the part of the defenders the wall was unguarded when the Spaniards approached, and the latter passed it without difficulty. But on the other side it was a different tale. As soon as the Tlascalans detected the presence of the invaders within their territory they attacked them with the greatest fury. In the first action they wounded several of the Spaniards and killed two of the horses, a serious loss to Cortes. For fourteen days there was almost incessant fighting. Three pitched battles were fought, in the course of which the mountaineers put over 30,000 men



MEXICO.

1 Lake of Xaltocan.

2 Lake of Tezcuco.

3 Lake of Chalco.

into the field. But formidable though their numbers were, and staunch though their courage undoubtedly was, they failed before the armour, the firearms, and the discipline of the Spaniards. Slowly but steadily Cortes and his men forced their way forward, till at length the Tlascalans acknowledged themselves beaten and received them within their city. From submission it was but a step to alliance, and the Spanish leader soon found his army of invasion swelled by a large number of Indian warriors who desired nothing so much as the humbling of their hereditary enemies, the dwellers in the great city of the lakes. After a short delay, attended by 6,000 Tlascalan auxiliaries, he set out for Cholula, a town situated about sixty miles to the south-east of Mexico.

The Cholulans accorded the Spaniards a most friendly welcome, and treated them for a few days with the greatest hospitality. Then an embassy reached the city rulers from Montezuma and their attitude changed. Cortes became suspicious that treachery was afoot, and his suspicions were confirmed by the discovery by Marina of a plot against himself and his followers. On the day of their departure from the city they were to be attacked as they were marching

through the narrow streets, and as many of them as possible to be taken prisoners and sent to Mexico to be sacrificed on the altars of the gods.

The general acted with his usual promptitude. Sending for the caciques, he informed them that he intended to leave on the following morning, and requested that they would furnish him with a large number of men to transport his baggage and artillery. They agreed, and it was arranged that these assistants should assemble at day-break in the great square where the Spaniards were quartered. At the appointed time they arrived, headed by the caciques. Meanwhile Cortes had planted his heavy guns at each of the three gates leading into the square, and had drawn up the main body of his troops along the sides of the enclosure. When the last of the natives was safely in the trap the Spanish commander gave the signal, and in an instant every arquebus and crossbow that his men possessed was discharged at the imprisoned Cholulans. Lead was followed by the cold steel. From all quarters the Spaniards rushed upon their victims. There was practically no resistance; the naked Indians, taken by surprise, were butchered where they stood. Their friends outside the square endeavoured to

rescue them, but were mown down by the guns and assaulted in the rear by the Tlascalans, whom Cortes had summoned to his aid from their camp in the suburbs. In a little while the whole city ran with blood. Everywhere the Cholulans were defeated, and the victors, breaking into the houses, secured a large booty of plate, jewels, and other valuables. After some hours Cortes was prevailed upon to call off his men from the slaughter, but not before 6,000 of the citizens had fallen victims to the vengeance of the Spaniards and the deep-rooted animosity of their Tlascalan foes. The city was then granted a pardon, the dead bodies were removed from the streets, the markets were reopened, and in a few days no sign but some heaps of still smouldering ruins told of the fearful punishment which had been meted out to the Cholulans.

This ruthless blow had its effect. There was no further opposition to the Spaniards' advance, and shortly afterwards they were received by Montezuma in his capital. As they approached the gates of Mexico the Emperor came to meet them in state, surrounded by a crowd of nobles and reclining in a litter embossed with gold. Four caciques bore the litter on their shoulders ;

another four held above it, at the end of silver wands, a canopy of feather-work bright with jewels. On coming in sight of his visitors Montezuma alighted and walked, his attendants spreading cotton carpets before his feet that they might not come in contact with the bare earth. The Indian prince was at this time about forty years old, tall and thin, with black hair and beard. His face, serious and dignified in expression, was of a lighter colour than those of most of his subjects. His bearing was that of a king.

Cortes saluted the Emperor with the profoundest respect, and after the exchange of a few words Montezuma re-entered his litter, while the Spaniards were conducted to their quarters, a range of stone buildings large enough to contain both themselves and their allies. The general's first step was to post sentries and dispose his guns so as to command all the approaches. Throughout the Spaniards' stay in the city their quarters always presented the appearance of an armed and strictly-guarded camp.

During the next few days several interviews took place with Montezuma, who bestowed many valuable presents on his guests. He

listened with interest to all that was told him of the greatness of the King of Spain, but when Cortes, through the medium of Marina, attempted to explain to him the mysteries of the Catholic Faith and urged him to renounce the savage worship of his fathers, he replied that he doubted not that the God of the Spaniards was a good being, but that his gods also were good to him, and he had no intention of forsaking them. Nor could he ever be induced to recede from this position. At the same time he seems to have been at least half convinced that the Spaniards were what many of his people already regarded them as being, the children of the fair god Quetzalcoatl, and he assured Cortes that his wishes should be obeyed in exactly the same way as his own.

Everything that met the invaders' eyes in their new surroundings filled them with admiration. Tenochtitlan, or Mexico, stood on an island near the western shore of a large lake adjoining two others of smaller size. It was regularly laid out in streets and squares. Though the dwellings of the mass of the inhabitants were little superior to the huts usually occupied by Indians, those of the nobles were palaces of stone, not lofty, but often cover-

ing a large expanse of ground. The population may have amounted to 300,000. The city was connected with the mainland on its southern, western, and north-western sides by three great stone causeways, works of solid masonry wide enough to admit of ten horsemen riding abreast. The largest, that to the south, ran for six miles through the lake. At regular intervals there were gaps to allow the free passage of the water, and these were bridged by platforms covered with earth which, as they could easily be drawn up or removed, rendered the capital almost impregnable against attack from the shore. The lake itself swarmed with the light canoes of the Indians engaged in bringing to the great market supplies and merchandise of all kinds from the numerous villages and smaller towns that lined its banks. They were also constantly plying about the canals with which the streets were intersected. On the lake floated, too, wandering gardens, rafts of reeds and rushes two or three hundred feet long, covered with soil which bore in profusion the richest fruits and the gayest flowers.

But what more than anything else aroused the wonder of the Spaniards was the sight of the massive temples, or *teocallis*, that rose

above the other buildings of the city. The chief of these were situated within an immense court surrounded by a high wall. Over all the rest soared the temple of Huitzilopotchli, tutelary deity and war-god of the Aztecs. It was a square-shaped tower of earth and pebbles faced with stone, about 100 feet high, and 300 feet square at the base. The building was divided into five storeys, each slightly smaller than the one immediately below, on which it was set so as to leave a ledge all round. Flights of steps on the outside led from storey to storey, arranged in such a way that to make the complete ascent the climber must pass four times round the structure along the ledges. The summit was a large area paved with broad flat stones. Here was the altar of sacrifice, its upper surface convex in shape in order to raise the breast of the human victim stretched upon it, and thus render it easier for the officiating priest to tear the heart from his body. At the other end of the space stood two sanctuaries containing images of the gods and the ashes of former Aztec princes. On an altar before each burned the never-extinguished sacred fire. The only other object that met the eye was the huge cylindrical drum of

serpents' skins, only beaten in moments of national crisis, when its dull thunder reverberated for miles across the waters of the lake. The image of Huitzilopotchli within the principal sanctuary was that of a colossal being with hideous features. His left foot was covered with the bright feathers of the humming-bird.¹ Round his waist coiled a serpent of pearls and other jewels. From his neck was suspended a chain of gold and silver hearts, symbolic of the sacrifice in which the god delighted. Further evidence of this was afforded the horrified Spaniards on the occasion of their first visit to the shrine. On the altar before the image lay a ghastly offering of three human hearts fresh cut from the bodies of some miserable prisoners of war. The slaughter of human beings was not, however, the only curse that blighted the religion of the Aztecs. Incredible though it may seem in a people who in many respects showed a considerable advance in civilisation, it was their custom to devour at their sacrificial feasts the bodies, carefully dressed and cooked, of those who had perished beneath the stone razors of the priests.²

¹ The name of the monster signified "humming-bird."

² The Aztecs were unacquainted with the use of iron.

Cortes was now established in the heart of the country he had come to conquer. But his position was extremely precarious. His sole security lay in the superstitious fears of the Emperor and the people, who up to the present apparently regarded the Spaniards as something more than common clay. That illusion once dispelled, all the Mexicans had to do was to cut off their visitors' retreat by removing the drawbridges, and then proceed to overwhelm them by weight of numbers. Before long news came that the garrison left in Vera Cruz had been attacked by natives and some of the Spaniards there killed. The general resolved on a desperate step. He decided to seize Montezuma, carry him off to the Spanish quarters, and hold him as a hostage. This bold stroke was successfully carried out, and completely changed the aspect of affairs. The prisoner was treated by his captors with the utmost deference, lived surrounded by his usual pomp, and continued nominally to administer the government. But Cortes was now the real master of the city. His first act was to prevent any further hostilities against his countrymen by demanding the surrender of the Indian officer who had led the attack on

Vera Cruz. Montezuma weakly assented, and the chief was delivered up to Cortes, who caused him to be burnt alive on a pyre composed of all the weapons stored in the State armoury. The Emperor was also compelled to make the Spaniards a present of 600,000 marks of pure gold and a large quantity of precious stones. Meanwhile Cortes stopped the horrible rites of human sacrifice, and set up the images of the Virgin and the Saints in many of the temples.

In the midst of these triumphs intelligence suddenly arrived that a Spanish force, under the command of a leader named Narvaez, had been sent by Velasquez and was already on the coast. The object of the expedition was to strip Cortes of his authority. Leaving 200 men in Mexico under his lieutenant Alvarado, the latter hurried to the coast to deal with the intruder, whom he found in the neighbourhood of Cempoalla. The contest between the two was soon decided. Narvaez was beaten in a fight in which he lost his left eye and was taken prisoner. His troops then joined the ranks of Cortes, while their commander was sent to Villa Rica. No sooner, however, was his rival disposed of than Cortes received an alarming

dispatch from Alvarado. The Spaniards in Mexico had been assaulted by the citizens, and though they had checked their first attacks, were in a state of siege that must end in surrender unless they were speedily relieved.

The general at once set out for Mexico by way of Tlascala, and after a rapid march rejoined his companions without encountering opposition. Soon after his departure Alvarado, suspecting that treachery was brewing in the city, had massacred in cold blood the greater part of the Aztec nobility when assembled at a religious festival. After this inhuman outrage the Spaniards had been attacked by the Mexicans from all sides, and it would have gone hard with them had not Montezuma himself ordered his subjects to withdraw. This, very unwillingly, the Indians had done, but they had cut off all supplies from reaching the Spanish quarters and had reduced the garrison to great extremities of hunger.

Having allowed Cortes to make his way again into the city, the Mexicans made another desperate attack on the Spaniards. A struggle took place which lasted for several days, and then the captive Emperor was prevailed upon to address the people from the palace. He

appeared clad in his imperial robes and commanded them to disperse to their homes, promising that the white men would shortly leave the city. But the Mexicans had lost their veneration for Montezuma. Suddenly a shower of arrows and stones descended on the spot on which he stood. He was wounded severely in the head, and was carried away into safety by his Spanish guard. His captors gave him the best medical treatment that they could, but the manifestation of the hatred and contempt in which he was now held by his subjects was more than his spirit could bear. He tore off the bandages from his wound, and sat sullenly brooding over the fate of the city he once had ruled. And in a little while he died.

With the death of Montezuma, Cortes lost his last hope of regaining his former ascendancy over the Mexicans. So long as the Emperor had been a hostage in his hands, a large number, at any rate, of the citizens might have been unwilling to push matters to the last extremity. But there was now not one of them who was not prepared to sacrifice everything to his determination to exterminate the foreigners to a man. The odds were too great. Cortes decided to evacuate the city.

The commencement of the retreat was fixed for the night of July 1, 1520. The northern causeway was the one chosen by which to gain the mainland, and as there were now three unbridged gaps in this, a portable timber platform was constructed and committed to the charge of a party who were to place it over the first opening, and then, when the army was past this, to carry it to the second and third in a similar manner. The Spanish troops with their Tlascalan allies were arranged in three divisions, the general taking charge of the guns and baggage in the centre.

The column met with no opposition till it was on the causeway. Then it was attacked by multitudes of Indians, who paddled up in their canoes, climbed the embankment and endeavoured to pull their enemies into the water. Others rained a tempest of arrows on friend and foe alike. The Mexicans suffered terrible losses, but large numbers of the Spaniards and their auxiliaries were either killed or dragged off in the canoes to be subsequently sacrificed. By the time that the rear of the retreating force had crossed the first gap the van was at the second. But now a disaster befell them. The weight of the men, horses, and

guns had jammed the platform so firmly in the masonry of the causeway that it could not be removed. There was no means of getting over the two remaining gaps except by swimming, an impossible task for soldiers burdened with armour. Meanwhile the pressure of those behind was pushing the leaders steadily forward. There was no alternative. As they came to the brink they plunged in one after another, with horses, guns, and baggage. Many a life was lost, but presently a bridge of bodies and wreckage afforded a footing for the majority, and they got across. The tragedy was repeated at the third gap. When Cortes reached the land, word came that a portion of his men still on the causeway must be overwhelmed unless help were rendered them. Followed by several soldiers, he swam his horse back through the water to their rescue, and succeeded in bringing many of them off in safety. Nearly the last to leave the causeway was Alvarado. The cavalier was unhorsed and heavily armoured. It seemed impossible that he could escape. But placing the butt of his lance in the water and using it as a jumping-pole, he sprang from the edge of the stonework and with a superhuman effort cleared the gap. Mexicans and Spaniards

gazed astonished at the feat, and for long afterwards the opening went by the name of Alvarado's Leap. On that fatal night Cortes lost the greater part of his treasure, his papers, his baggage, and his artillery. Probably about 450 Spaniards were killed and missing, and 4,000 of their native allies.

Tlascala was reached by the survivors without much difficulty. They had to fight one pitched battle with the Indians. In this they were faced by apparently overpowering numbers. But again discipline told, and though it was all lance and sword work, since the troops had no firearms left, the Mexicans were driven from the field, leaving a large booty behind them.

The followers of Cortes now regarded Mexico as definitely lost. But this was not the opinion of Cortes himself, and so great was his influence over them and over the Tlascalans that before long he had raised and armed what he considered a sufficient force for a second invasion. His experience of the causeways had taught him that, if he were ever to succeed in taking the city, it could only be by gaining command of the waters on which it stood. He therefore ordered the parts of thirteen brigantines to be conveyed on the shoulders of Indians from

Vera Cruz, and put together and launched on Lake Tezcucó.

Advancing slowly through the country and skirmishing continually with the enemy, the Spaniards soon arrived at Tacuba, which stood at a short distance from the north-west corner of the lakes. From here he reconnoitred the capital, and found it in a better posture for defence than might have been expected. Montezuma's nephew and son-in-law, Guatemozin, a young man of twenty-five, had been elected Emperor, and by his firm rule and determined spirit had animated the Mexicans with the resolve to defend their city to the last against the Europeans. He had strengthened the fortifications, reorganised the army, summoned his vassals to his aid, and sent away into the surrounding country the more useless part of the population.

Meanwhile Cortes' brigantines had been carried to the city of Tezcucó, near the shore of the lake of that name. This town the general had chosen as his headquarters, and from it a canal was dug to the lake, 12 feet deep, 12 feet wide, and a mile and a half in length; for close on two months 8,000 men were engaged on the task. At length it was finished. The ships were set

up, rigged and armed, and on April 28, 1521, they sailed out into the lake. At the same time the land forces were planted in three bodies at the entrances to the three principal causeways. A long and stubborn struggle ensued between besiegers and besieged, the former constantly trying to make their way into the city, the latter as often beating them back. Soon the Spaniards had occupied the causeways, only to find that their real difficulties were but beginning. In the street fighting they were hampered by want of room, while every house formed a fortress for the enemy. On one occasion they were defeated in a pitched battle, a misfortune which resulted in the defection of several of their native allies. But Cortes was determined to succeed. He adopted a new plan, no longer dissipating his strength in vain attacks, but capturing the city bit by bit, and as he advanced destroying every vestige of it in his possession. In the end this ruthless policy achieved its object. Slowly pressed within narrower and narrower limits, and weakened by famine and disease, the Mexicans at last submitted, and Cortes took possession of the remains of the capital on August 13. Guatemozin, with his wife and children, was

taken prisoner as he sought to escape in a canoe.

During the siege a large number of the population perished—the estimates vary from 120,000 to 240,000. The Spanish loss was comparatively small, though that of their allies was heavy. On the day after the surrender Cortes sent the remaining citizens away into the country. There were some 50,000 men left, together with women and children, all half-starved, many sick and scarcely able to make their way along the roads.

With the capture of the city the main obstacle to the conquest of the country was removed. Cortes was now all-powerful in Mexico, of which the Emperor Charles V appointed him Governor and Captain-General. In consolidating his dominion he proved himself to possess the qualities not only of a great leader and general, but also of a great administrator. He established a strong police, restored the capital, built other towns, and encouraged in every way the development of a new civilisation.

The years that followed the conquest saw many expeditions undertaken, some by the Governor himself, others by his lieutenants. Alvarado penetrated as far south as Guate-

mala, where he built the city of S. Iago. About the same time an armament was sent by sea to Honduras. The commander of this on reaching his destination attempted to throw off the authority of the Governor in Mexico. But the long arm of Cortes was not to be evaded. With 150 Spaniards and 300 Indians, he proceeded in person against his rebellious officer, came on him in his colony, and put him to death. For carrying out this extraordinary march through 1,000 miles of densely forested country the only guides he possessed were his compass and a painted cotton map supplied him by a cacique. During the expedition a tragedy occurred which has left a blot on the Spanish general's name. Fearing to leave Guatemozin in Mexico, he had taken him with him. In the course of the march, at a time when they were in great difficulties, it was alleged that the ex-Emperor was plotting to massacre the Spaniards and return with the Indians to Mexico. Despite his protestations of innocence, Cortes had him hanged on a tree in the wilderness. This was in the year 1525. Later enterprises included the exploration of California, and the dispatch of ships to the Moluccas from the western coast of Mexico,

or New Spain, as the country now came to be called.

In 1540 Cortes returned to Spain. It was his second visit thither since the conquest. But the court was jealous of his fame and the Emperor received him coldly. He was now an elderly man. His health began to fail. Finally he died in comparative obscurity near Seville, in 1547. His body was buried in the chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia, but afterwards, in accordance with a wish expressed in his will, was removed to the country he had conquered.

Spain had great cause to congratulate herself on the conquest of Mexico. Hitherto her new possessions in the West had brought her little profit. The wealth afforded by the islands was insignificant, while the scanty settlements on the mainland, so far from proving remunerative, had resulted chiefly in the loss of Spanish lives. On the other hand, Portugal, her great rival in the race for overseas treasure, was reaping year by year a richer harvest from the Far East. Mexico, however, differed from previous acquisitions. It was something more than a savage waste of undeveloped country. It was an empire, not civilised in our sense of

the term, but inhabited by a people who had at least risen high enough in the scale to build populous cities, to pursue an advanced system of agriculture, and to amass large quantities of the precious metals. Its conquest by the Spaniards coincided in point of time with the revelation by Magellan of the vast breadth of ocean that divided America from the eastern shores of Asia. Henceforth they realised that the lands they had discovered were not a stepping-stone to the riches of the East, but a territory the value of which must depend upon its own independent resources. Had their disappointment in finding themselves farther than ever from the East Indies not been balanced by the discovery of so fair a prize as Mexico, they might have relaxed their efforts to continue the exploration of lands which had to the present yielded them a comparatively poor return for all they had accomplished and suffered. But the spoils of Mexico gave them a fresh incentive. The work of discovery and conquest went actively forward, and in a few years resulted in the acquisition of countries to the south of the Isthmus whose mineral wealth made the Spanish Crown the wealthiest in the world.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONQUEST OF PERU

BEFORE the conquest of Mexico the Spaniards in Central America had gathered intelligence of a wealthy and civilised nation far to the south ; but the dark tangled forests and unhealthy climate of the vast tracts that lay between them and this land of riches opposed for long an impassable barrier even to Spanish greed and Spanish enterprise. Though more than one attempt had been made in that direction, each had proved fruitless and had resulted in a loss of life that after a time discouraged further efforts.

Among the colonists at Panama¹ there was, however, a man of singular determination who, while Cortes was dazzling the world by his exploits in the North, resolved to win similar glory by invading the native empire supposed to exist far down the western shores of the great Southern continent. This was Francisco Piz-

¹ Founded in 1519,

arro, of whom mention has been made in connection with Ojeda and Balboa. He was without education, and had been bred in Estremadura of Spain as a swineherd. Quitting a life which offered his bold spirit few attractions, he had served in the Italian wars, and then gone out to the West and settled after a time in the Isthmus. Here, at the age of fifty, he began to consider the possibility of extending the Spanish conquests to the south, and in making his plans became associated with a brave and simple-minded soldier of fortune older than himself, named Almagro, and with Hernando Luque, a rich ecclesiastic.

The three men managed to equip two vessels, of the larger of which Pizarro took command, and set off in 1524, in November, the stormiest season of the year. Almagro followed him in the smaller ship. Both touched at several spots on the coast, but everywhere they found only swamps and forests. Provisions ran short; the men fell sick and many died. At length they encamped on the island of Gallo, whence Almagro returned to Panama for reinforcements. But reports of their ill fortune had reached the colony, and so unpopular had this undertaking become that nobody was willing to risk his life



FRANCISCO PIZARRO, CONQUEROR OF PERU
From the original painting in the Palace of the Viceroy at Lima

by joining it. A ballad was sung in the streets in which Pizarro was represented as a butcher, and Almagro as a drover whose business it was to collect victims for his master. Pizarro, however, refused to be beaten. Most of his followers deserted him, but after spending some months on the island with the remainder, he at length received tardy succour from Panama in the shape of a single vessel. In this he sailed down the coast for a considerable distance. His force was insufficient to form a settlement. Accordingly, having satisfied himself as to the wealth of the Peruvian Empire, he returned to Panama in 1527. He next proceeded to Spain to ask leave to conquer Peru, and by sheer force of personality succeeded in making a favourable impression on the authorities there. His demands were granted, and he was appointed Governor and Captain-General of all lands that he should win for the Sovereign. Cortes, who happened to be in Spain at that time, made him a generous gift of money to assist the enterprise. On his return to the New World he was accompanied by three of his brothers, each destined to play a prominent part in the stirring scenes of the next few years.

In Panama Pizarro obtained three small ships, on board of which he placed 180 men and 27 horses. Almagro, as before, was left behind to join the expedition later with reinforcements and supplies; and after a solemn service in the cathedral church, the general embarked early in January 1531, and sailed on his expedition to Peru.

A prosperous voyage of thirteen days brought them to the Bay of S. Matthew, where they landed and started their southward march. Coming to the province of Coaque, they surprised an Indian town which yielded a very large treasure of gold and silver. Pizarro divided a part of the spoil among his men and sent the remainder back to Panama, hoping in this way to attract fresh recruits. His calculation proved correct. Soon afterwards he was joined by two considerable detachments under the command of experienced officers.

The empire of Peru at this time extended along the Pacific Coast from the 2nd degree of north to the 37th degree of south latitude. Its breadth is difficult to determine, but it is certain that in many parts it stretched some way beyond the mountains into the interior

of the continent. Within its boundaries was found every variety of climate, from the tropical heat of the plains to the temperate airs of the uplands and the intense cold of the snow-covered heights beyond. The mountains were among the most productive of minerals in the world, especially of silver. So plentiful, indeed, were the precious metals that we are told that in Cuzco, the capital, "gold and silver seemed to be the only things that were not wealth." For long years after the conquest of the country by the Spaniards the mines poured into the royal exchequer in Europe a steady stream of bullion that made the King of Spain the richest monarch in Christendom. The Peruvians were a peaceful and contented folk, excelling in agriculture and several of the manufacturing arts. From the wool of the native sheep they wove fabrics of an unsurpassed fineness and beauty. Many of them were cunning workers in gold and silver. Not only in the plains but on the mountain slopes every patch of land capable of cultivation was turned to the best advantage in producing fruits, cereals and flowers; and where water was scarce the lack of it was supplied by an advanced system of irrigation. The people had developed, too, an

engineering skill which had resulted in the construction of massive buildings and bridges, and paved roads of enormous length giving access from the capital to the extremities of the empire.

The ruling caste was that of the Incas, children of the sun, the chief of whom was Emperor and regarded as half-divine in character. By these the whole burden of government was sustained with a minute thoroughness and care that supervised every department of the people's activities and regulated every hour of their lives from birth to death. Under the benevolent despotism of the Incas no man could rise above the station in which he was born. His work, his holidays, his food, his clothing—everything was settled for him. He could marry only on a certain day of the year, live only in the district assigned for his habitation, till only the land to which he had been assigned as a tenant. Yet if riches were beyond his grasp he need never fear poverty, and, so long as he was content to remain without initiative and without ambition, life was a pleasant business enough. The mass of the Peruvians were in fact devoid of political liberty, contented children of a paternal Government which

took enormous pains to ensure their physical well-being, but never dreamt of allowing them the smallest share in the framing and administering of the laws that hedged them in on every side. The religion of the country was the worship of the sun. Human sacrifices occasionally took place, but only on a very small scale ; and they were never followed by the cannibal feasts that disgraced the religious rites of the Aztecs. Unlike the latter, too, the Peruvians did not sacrifice their prisoners of war. The empire was constantly being enlarged by conquest, but it was the invariable rule that the conquered tribes should be admitted to full rights of citizenship, and encouraged by every means to settle down as orderly subjects of their new masters.

As soon as he was ready for a forward move Pizarro, following the example of Cortes, struck straight at the heart of the Peruvian empire. While he advanced he sent presents and messages to Atahualpa, the reigning Inca, assuring him that he came as the peaceful envoy of a mighty monarch who desired to cultivate the friendship of the Indian Sovereign. By these artifices he arrived without fighting at Caxamalca, a city famous for its springs of hot water,

where the court was at that time in residence. Here he and his men were assigned quarters in some public buildings which they immediately turned into a fortress. Having done this, they awaited a visit from the Inca.

On the next day Atahualpa came, borne on a throne of state covered with plumes of feathers and with gold and silver ornaments, and surrounded by courtiers, singers and dancers. He was also followed by a body of troops which the Spaniards estimated at 30,000 men. As the Inca approached, Pizarro's chaplain stepped forward and delivered a lengthy oration, expounding the mysteries of the Catholic Faith and requiring the Indian Emperor to acknowledge himself the vassal of the King of Spain, on whom the Pope had bestowed all the lands of the Western Hemisphere. Atahualpa, as the father's speech was translated to him, was naturally amazed at the pretensions of this insignificant band of strangers. He made a contemptuous reply to their demands, observing that he himself was the greatest prince upon earth, and that the Pope of whom the orator spoke must be mad to talk of giving away countries which did not belong to him. Instantly Pizarro gave the signal for battle, and,



SPANISH EXPANSION IN THE NEW WORLD, FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES.

rushing forward with a few chosen followers, succeeded after a wild struggle in dragging the Inca from his throne and in carrying him off a prisoner. The efforts of the Peruvians to rescue their Emperor were of no avail. Incredible though it may seem, 30,000 men were routed by 180, and 4,000 of them slain, without the loss of a single life, and with the infliction of only a single wound, on the other side. That wound was accidentally received by Pizarro himself from one of his own soldiers as he stretched out his arm to shield the person of Atahualpa.

The Inca attempted to regain his liberty by an appeal to the Spaniards' ruling passion. The room in which he was imprisoned measured 22 feet by 16. He offered, if they would let him go, to fill this apartment with gold as high as he could reach with his hand. His offer was accepted, and the filling of the room began. But so vast an amount of treasure took some time to collect, even in Peru, and before the mark was reached the invaders melted it down into ingots of a uniform size and divided it up. After the deduction of the portion reserved for the Crown, the remainder yielded each of the horse-soldiers about £8,000, while the footmen

received rather smaller shares. Many of the soldiers now expressed a wish to return to Panama with their gains, and Pizarro raised no objection, since, as on the former occasion, he counted on the display of so much wealth as likely to prove a powerful attraction to fresh recruits. Meanwhile Atahualpa was not released. The Spaniards had never had any real intention of fulfilling their part of the bargain. On the other hand, they soon reached the conclusion that his continued existence among them as a prisoner was a source of danger to themselves. He was accordingly brought to trial on a series of ridiculous charges and condemned to be burnt alive. On his consenting at the last moment to be baptised, the sentence was commuted to death by strangling at the stake.

His execution was followed by rebellions among the people ; but Pizarro crushed these without much difficulty, and in a short time made himself master of the country. This astonishing feat, the conquest of an empire in the course of a few months by a handful of desperate adventurers, is to be traced largely to the political condition of that empire. In Peru everything depended upon the Emperor. In his person the whole fabric of government was centred ; when

he fell it crumbled to pieces. His death induced a kind of paralysis among the people, broken by a few spasmodic efforts at revolt which gave the Spaniards little trouble. It is to be noted, too, that at the time of the invasion the empire had recently been greatly disturbed by a struggle between rival claimants to the throne; and though Atahualpa had triumphed, his competitor, a prince of purer blood, was still alive, and possessed the sympathies of a considerable number of the population.¹

Pizarro next proceeded to the capital, Cuzco, which he occupied in the name of the King of Spain, and soon afterwards founded on the coast the city of Los Reyes, subsequently known as Lima, a variant of Rimac, the name of the valley in which it stood. The Spanish court, more than satisfied with the immense treasure which the conqueror remitted as the royal portion of the spoils, made him a grant of 70 leagues of coast in addition to what had already been assigned to him, and raised him to the rank of Marquess.

¹ This chieftain, whose name was Huascar, was murdered, possibly at Atahualpa's instigation, during the Inca's imprisonment among the Spaniards.

Shortly after these events, it was decided that Almagro, who was now with Pizarro and had been given the government of a tract of land extending for 100 leagues along the shores of Chile, should attempt the conquest of that country. He set out with a portion of the forces, but the expedition had to face hardships and privations more severe than any yet encountered. In the high country which the Spaniards had to traverse the cold was so intense that several men and horses were frozen to death, and were found months later, lying stiff and still, in the positions in which they had fallen on the march. The natives also were a hardy race, not easy to be subdued. They were dressed in the skins of seals and sea-wolves, and showed great skill in the use of the bow.

It was not, however, the difficulties of his task which eventually caused the old cavalier to retrace his steps to Peru. Ever since Pizarro's mission to Spain, relations between the two leaders had been strained, since Almagro had good reason to suspect that the other, in approaching the authorities there, had pushed his own interests at the cost of those of his associates. Cuzco had been claimed by both men; Pizarro had obtained possession of it.

Almagro, after studying the royal patents which defined the boundaries of the districts conferred upon himself and his fellow-captain, was confirmed in his conclusion that the city lay within his own dominions. About the same time news reached him that a number of the Peruvians had taken up arms and were besieging Pizarro's brothers in Cuzco. He immediately marched back to the capital, losing many men on the way. On his arrival he totally defeated the Indian army and relieved the Spaniards hard-pressed within the walls. He then threw Pizarro's brothers into prison.

But Pizarro, who was at Lima, was not an easy man to circumvent. Professing himself willing to reach an understanding with his rival, he entered into negotiations with him in the course of which he managed to extricate his brothers from his clutches. This accomplished, he prepared to take his revenge by force of arms. A fight ensued between the forces of the two generals in which Almagro was beaten and captured. A little later Pizarro had him beheaded.

After Almagro's death the Spaniards resumed their conquest of Chile, and before long had penetrated to the 40th degree of south latitude.

Farther north, in 1533, an officer of Pizarro's subdued the province of Quito, where he was joined for a time by Alvarado, Cortes' old lieutenant, now Governor of the southern provinces of New Spain. A few years afterwards an expedition of greater geographical interest set out from Quito. To the east of that city the mountainous country was said by the Indians to abound in cinnamon trees. Gonzalez Pizarro, the youngest of the brothers, undertook to explore it. He began his march in 1540 with 350 Spaniards and 4,000 Indians. The usual hardships were met with, in addition to violent earthquake shocks. In the province of Zumaco, Gonzalez found the cinnamon trees, and then continued his discoveries in an easterly direction. After a march of 600 miles along the banks of a river, provisions became so scarce that the explorers were on the verge of starvation. The leader called a halt and ordered Francisco de Orellana, one of his captains, to take fifty men in a vessel they had built and go on down the stream till he found food. He was then to return, leaving all his baggage at a place where, the Indians said, two great rivers met.

Orellana went forward and found that the

Benual

Indian report of the existence of a second river was correct. The adventurers had, in fact, been descending the Napo, a tributary of the Amazon, and the advance party was now on the waters of that great stream itself. But they could procure no provisions; nothing met the eye but flooded plains and dark, impenetrable forests. In this extremity, Orellana decided that no good purpose could be served by his rejoining his commander, nor indeed had his crew enough strength left in them to row back against the current. On the last day of the year, having eaten their shoes and some saddle leather boiled with wild herbs, they pushed out into the river and let it carry them whither it would. Their subsequent sufferings were terrible; many of them died of hunger or were killed by the Indians. But at last, in August 1541, Orellana himself with a few survivors, after a voyage of 3,000 miles, reached the Atlantic and got to a Spanish colony. On his return to Spain he mentioned, amongst other adventures, his encountering certain tribes of female warriors who inhabited the banks of the river, to which, from this circumstance, he gave the name of the River of Amazons.

Gonzalez Pizarro, on reaching the spot where

he had arranged to meet Orellana, was dismayed to find that his captain had deserted him. The only thing left to do was to return, if he could manage it. This he eventually did, but not before he had lost all the Indians and all but 80 of the Spaniards who had started with him.

During his absence a revolution had taken place. Many of the Spaniards were dissatisfied with the harsh rule of Francisco Pizarro, and in particular the "Men of Chile," the old followers of Almagro, towards whom he was especially severe. This faction found a leader in the son of their former commander, a young man of good education and generous character. Yet though the malcontents steadily increased in numbers, the Governor, who was residing in Lima, seems not to have realised the danger that was threatening him. At length, on June 26, 1541, a party of men issued from Almagro's house and forced an entrance into the palace. Pizarro defended himself bravely, but was overpowered and stabbed in the throat, and died immediately afterwards. He left no children to inherit his title and possessions, and on the death of the last of his brothers his family became extinct.

The history of the colonies in South America

for the next few years is a record of fierce struggles between rival leaders for the government of the country. Finally order was restored, and for a long time Peru and Chile furnished the Spanish treasury with an apparently inexhaustible supply of the precious metals. "But when the lawlessness of the Spanish colonists ceased, their activity ceased with it. The causes which paralysed the energies of Spain in the sixteenth century extended their influence to its dependencies in the West. The colonies sank into a condition of comparative torpor ; and the zeal and success with which the Spaniards at first prosecuted geographical discoveries is not more astonishing than the indifference with which they regarded them for centuries after."

THE END

INDEX

"For the bringing of which into this following shape, which here thou seest, what toilsome days, what restless nights I have endured; what a variety of pages I have searched into; what pains I have not spared; into how manifold labours I have entered, and yet what fair opportunities of private ease I have neglected; albeit thyself canst hardly imagine, yet I by experience do find and feel, and some of my entire friends can sufficiently testify."
—*Adapted from Hakluyt, Preface to "Principal Navigations."*

Abyssinia, 37, 56, 76 n., 95
Acla, 169-71
Acre, 21
Aden, 95 and n., 96, 234
Adriatic Sea, 21, 36
Agulhas Current, 76
Ailly, Pierre d', 104 n.
Albans, St., 30
Albuquerque, Alfonso de, 88-91,
97, 233-4
Albuquerque, Franciscus de, 88, 89
Alexander the Great, 19
Alexander, Pillars of, 8
Alexander VI, Pope, 84, 147 n.
Alexandria, 2, 4, 10, 19, 20
Alfergany, 12
Alfonso V, King of Portugal,
69, 70, 71, 232
Algarve, Kingdom of, 56
Almagro, Diego de, 214-6, 225-6,
229
Almagro the Younger, 229
Almamous, Caliph, 12, 14
Almeida, Francisco de, 89-91,
96-7, 233
Alva, Duke of, 152

Alvarado, Pedro de, 201-2, 205-6,
209, 227
Amazon, River, 157, 228, 234
Amboyna, Island of, 80
Amrou, 4
Andalusia, 116
Andaman Islands, 46 n.
Angel, Louis de St., 115
Antilia, Island of, 48
Antilles, Lesser, 133
Antoninus of Placentia, 9-10
Aquileia, 9
Arabia, 2, 47
Aragon, 53, 115, 232
Aral, Sea of, 26
Arguin, Bight of, 62, 64
Arim, cupola of the earth, 6
Ascension Island, 85, 233
Astrolabe, 14, 54
Atahualpa, The Inca, 219-20,
222-4 and n.
Atlantis, 48
Attila, 3, 16
Augustin, Cape St., 172, 173
Azores Islands, 49, 64-5, 106,
129, 147 n., 232

- Babylonia, 3
 Bacon, Roger, 8, 104 n.
 Bagdad, 4, 12, 14, 16, 20, 27
 Bahama Islands, 78, 125, 233
 Bahama Strait, 183
 Balboa, Vasco Nuñez de, 159-71,
 173, 214, 234
 Balsas, River, 170
 Baltic Sea, 20, 30
 Barcelona, 130
 Bargu, Land of, 41
 Barkah, 31
 Bastidas, Rodrigo de, 150, 157,
 233
 Batoum, 20
 Batu, 25, 26, 31
 Behaim, Martin, of Nuremberg,
 135 (map)
 Benedict the Pole, 25-9
 Bengal, Bay of, 46
 Benin, Bight of, 70
 Béthencourt, Jean de, 52, 232
 Bethlehem, 9
 Biafra, Bight of, 70
 Blanche, mother of Louis IX,
 29 n.
 Blanco, Cape, 61-2, 66, 68, 232
 Bobadilla, Francisco de, 144,
 146, 148, 149 n.
 Bojador, Cape, 59-61, 64, 232
 Bokhara, 31
 Bordeaux, 9, 231
 Borneo, 80, 179
 Bosphorus, 1, 17
 Braganza, House of, 152
 Brahmins, 47
 Brazil, 84 and n., 146, 147 n.,
 157, 172, 174, 233
 Brendan, St., 48
 Brenner Pass, 21 n.
 Breslau, 25
 Britain, 15
 Bruges, 21 n.
 Brussels, 29
 Buddhism, 32 n.
 Budomel, King, 67
 Buenos Aires, 234
 Burma, 36
 Byzantium, 2, 4. See Constantinople
 Cabo Tormentoso, 75
 Cabral Gonzalo, 65, 232
 Cabral, Pedro Alvarez, 83-5,
 146, 233
 Cadamosto, Aloisio de, 65-9, 232
 Cadiz, 132, 148
 Cairo, 20, 76 n.
 Calicut, 78-80, 82, 84-5, 90, 233
 California, 210
 Cam, Diego, 72, 232
 Cambay, 90
 Campeachy, Gulf of, 183
 Cananor, 85-6
 Canary Islands, 49, 51-2, 59,
 65, 78, 118, 232-3
 Cano, Sebastian del, 179, 180
 and n.
 Canton, 23, 46 n., 234
 Caracas, 148
 Carpini, Joannes de Plano, 24-9,
 30, 231
 Carthage, 51
 Carthage (America), 158-9,
 185
 Caspian Sea, 20, 26
 Castile, 53, 70, 115, 232
 Cathay, 23 and n., 37-8, 41,
 125, 150
 Caxamalca, 219
 Celebes, Island of, 179
 Cempoalla, 189, 201
 Ceuta, 14, 55-6
 Ceylon, 36, 46, 78, 98
 Charlemagne, 8, 18
 Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain,
 154 n., 174, 209, 211, 217, 234
 Chile, 178, 225-6, 230, 234
 "Chile, Men of," 229
 China, 6, 12, 14, 20, 23, 33, 36-7,
 41, 45, 231, 234. See Polo,
 Marco
 Chin-San Ba-Yan, General, 41

- Cholula, 192-4
Christian Topography, 10
 Cibao, 127, 134
 Cipangu, Island of, 44, 125, 127.
 See Japan
 Clermont, Council of, 18, 231
 Coaque, Province of, 216
 Cochin, 85, 88-9, 91 and n., 233
 Colon, Niccolo, 100-1
 Columbus, Christopher, 75, 78,
 100 and n.-153, 155-7, 172,
 180-1, 232-3
 Columbus, relatives of:
 Bartholomew (brother), 107-8
 137-8, 142, 150
 Diego (brother), 135
 Diego (son), 107, 112, 152, 162
 Domenico (father), 100
 Fernando (son), 101 n., 145 n.
 Luis (grandson), 152
 Philippa (wife), 102, 106. See
 Moniz, Philippa
 Susanna (mother), 100
 Comorin, Cape, 6
 Compass, 54
 Congo, Kingdom of the, 71
 Congo River, 72, 73, 232
 Constantine, 8, 9
 Constantinople, 9, 21-2, 35, 232
 Cordova, 4, 108-9, 231
 Correo, Pedro, 106
 Cortes, Hernando, 154 n., 184-
 211, 213, 215, 219, 234
 Corvo, Island of, 65
 Cosmas Indicopleustes, 10-11
 Council of the Indies, 139
 Covilham, Pedro de, 76 n., 232
 Crimea, 22
 Crusades, 8, 18-9, 21, 231
 Cuba, 125-6, 135-6, 148-50,
 153, 182-5, 233-4
 Cuzco, 217, 224-6

 Dalmatia, 29
 Danube, River, 21 n.
 Darfet, Anne, 52, 58
 Darien, Gulf of, 150, 157-9, 233
 Darien, Santa Maria de la An-
 tigua del, 159, 162, 167
 Davila, Pedrarias, 167-70
 Dead Sea, 9
 Demarcation, line of, 147 n., 233
 Diaz, Bartholomew, 72-5, 84,
 138, 232
 Diu, 90-1, 234
 Dnieper, River, 25
 Dominica, Island of, 132, 233
 Don, River, 25
 Dragon's Mouth, 142, 233
 Dutch, the, 99

 Eannes, Gil, 60
 Eastern products, 22-3, 79-80
 Eastern Roman Empire, 2
 Edrisi the Moor, 14-5, 231
 Edward III, King of England, 51
 Edward, King of Portugal, 232
 Egypt, 3, 10, 20-1, 49, 50, 56,
 76 n., 79, 90, 95
 Egypt, Sultan of, 79
 Encisco, The Bachelor, 159-60,
 162, 167
 English Channel, 101
 Eratosthenes, 104
 Estremadura, 184, 214
 Euphrates, River, 20

 Fanfur, Prince, 41
 Fayal, Island of, 65
 Ferdinand the Catholic, King of
 Aragon, 109, 111, 113, 115,
 131, 145-6, 148, 151, 157, 160,
 162-3, 167, 232
 Fernando Po, Island of, 70
 Flanders fleet, 21 n.
 Flemish Islands, 65. See Azores
 Florence, 103
 Flores, Island of, 106
 Florida, 183-4, 234
 Fonseca, Bishop, 139-40, 156
 Formiga Islands, 65
 Fortunate Isles, 51
 Francis of Assisi, St., 24
 Franks, 3

- Gallo, Island of, 214
 Gama, Vasco da, 75-83, 88, 233
 Gambia, River, 56, 62, 68
 Garden of Eden, 141
 Gascony, 38 n.
 Gaul, 3
 Genoa, 22, 36, 54, 100, 231
 Gibraltar, Strait of, 3, 50
 Gilboa, 9
 Goa, 92 and n., 94-7, 234
 Golden Horde, 37
 Gomez, Fernando, 70
 Gonsalvez, Antam, 61
 Good Hope, Cape of, 74-6, 91
 and n., 146, 180, 232
 Granada, 113, 115, 231-2
 Great Fish River, 74, 76
 "Green Sea of Darkness," 105
 Grijalva, Juan de, 183-4, 234
 Guacanagari, The Cacique,
 127-8, 133-4
 Guadeloupe, Island of, 133, 233
 Guatemala, 209
 Guatemozin, Emperor of Mexico,
 207-10

 Haiti, 126. See Hispaniola
 Hanno the Carthaginian, 50
 Havana, 153, 183
 Helena, Island of St., 85, 233
 Helena, mother of Constantine, 9
 Henry the Navigator, Prince,
 52, 55-60, 62, 64-5, 69-71,
 102, 232
 Henry VII, King of England,
 107-8
 Hercules, Pillars of, 2, 8, 49
 Herodotus, 7 (map), 50
 Hispaniola, 127-9, 133-5, 137-
 40, 142, 148-9, 151, 153,
 155-6, 158-60, 162, 182, 184,
 233
 Holland, 99
 Honduras, 149-50, 157, 210, 233
 Huascar, the rival Inca, 224 n.
 Huitzilopotchli, the war god,
 198-9

 Iago, City of St. (Guatemala),
 210
 Iceland, 102
Imago Mundi, 104 n.
 Indus, River, 20
 Inn, River, 21 n.
 Innocent IV, Pope, 24, 28-9
 Isabel, Duchess of Burgundy, 65
 Isabella, Queen of Castile, 108-9
 112-5, 122, 135, 145, 151,
 232-3
 Isabella, Town of, 134, 137, 156

 Jamaica, 136-7, 150, 152, 182,
 233
 Japan, 36, 41 n., 78, 98. See
 Cipangu
 Java, 36, 180
 Java, Lesser, 46. See Sumatra
 Jaxartes, River, 26
 Jenghis Khan, 23, 31, 231
 Jerusalem, 9, 17, 19, 231
 John I, King of Portugal, 55,
 231, 232
 John II, King of Portugal, 71,
 75, 106, 118, 232
 John III, King of Portugal, 234
 John of Gaunt, 55, 231
 Jordan, River, 9
 Julian, Port St., 175-7
 Justinian, Emperor, 9

 Kanbalu, 32, 38-40
 Karakorum, 26, 29, 231
 Khotan, 32
 Kiang, River, 42-4
 Kiev, 25, 29
 Kinsai, 41-3
 Kitai, 23 n.
 Koomis, 27
 Koran, 4, 12
 Kublaï, Grand Khan, 31-5,
 38-42, 44, 45 and n., 46
 Kuyuk, Grand Khan, 28-30

 Lagos (Portugal), 56, 59, 63
 Lama of Thibet, Grand, 32 n.

- Leon, Juan Ponce de, 182-3,
 234
 Leoncico, The bloodhound, 163 n.
 Levant, 19, 21, 26
 Libya, 49, 50
 Lima, 224, 226, 229
 Lisbon, 55, 63-4, 76, 78, 82,
 85, 87-8, 92, 97-9, 101, 107,
 231
 Lombardy, 38 n.
 London, 21 n., 108
 Lot's wife, 9
 Louis IX, King of France, 29
 and n., 30
 Louis XI, King of France, 101
 Luque, Hernando, 214
 Lyons, 25, 29

 Macao, 98 n., 234
 Macham, Robert, 51-2, 58, 231
 Madagascar, 6, 37, 47, 233
 Madeira, 49, 52, 58, 65, 231-2,
 Magalhaes, Fernando, 174-9,
 212, 234
 Magdalena, River, 157
 Magellan, Straits of, 177
 Main, River, 21 n.
 Malacca, 80, 93, 94 and n., 95,
 98 n., 174, 234
 Malindi, 78
 Mamelukes, 21
 Mandeville, Sir John, 30, 38 n.,
 136
 Mangi, 33, 37, 41, 44-5, 136
 Mangiu, 136
 Manoel the Fortunate, King of
 Portugal, 75, 82, 87, 89, 92,
 94 n., 233
 Mar Dulce, 173
 Maracaibo, Gulf of, 158
 Margarita, Island of, 142, 233
 Marina, 186, 192, 196
 Martel, Charles, 3, 231
 Martinique, 149
 Mary, Island of St., 65, 129
 Massoudy, 12
 Matthew, Bay of St., 216

 Mauretania, 50
 Mauritius, 233
 Mecca, 12, 95, 231
 Medina, 95
 Medina Celi, Duke of, 108, 155
 Medina Sidonia, Duke of, 108,
 211
 Mesopotamia, 96
 Mexico, 150 n., 154, 185-213,
 234
 Mexico, City of, 190, 192-209
 Mexico, Gulf of, 182-5, 188, 234
 Mina, Fort St. George de, 71, 232
 Mohammed, 1, 2, 4, 95, 231
 Molucca Islands, 80, 95, 147 n.,
 173, 179, 210
 Mombasa, 89
 Moniz, Philippa, 102, 106
 Montezuma, Emperor of Mexico,
 185-8, 190, 192, 194-6, 200-3,
 207
 Morocco, 52, 55, 69,
 Mossel Bay, 76
 Mountains of the Moon, 15, 63
 Mozambique, 76, 78, 84

 Napo, River, 228
 Narvaez, Panfilo de, 201
 Natal, Port, 76
 Navidad, Fort la, 128, 133
 Necho, Pharaoh, 49
 New Spain, 184, 211, 227
 Newfoundland, 146
 Nile, River, 10, 15, 49, 95
 " Nile, The Western," 56, 63
 Nina, 117, 126, 128-9
 Nombre de Dios, 159

 Ojeda, Alonso de, 155-8, 185,
 214, 233
 Omar, Caliph, 4
Opus majus, 104 n.
 Order of Christ, 57, 92
 Order of Santiago, 97
 Orellana, Francisco de, 227-9,
 234
 Orinoco Delta, 141, 233

- Ormuz, 35, 96, 234
 Ovando, Nicholas de, 148-9, 151, 185
 Oxus, River, 20-1, 32
 Palermo, 14
 Palos, Port of, 112, 116, 129, 157
 Panama, 213 and n., 214-6, 223
 Paria, Gulf of, 141, 156, 233
 Patagones, 176
 Pavia, University of, 100
 Pearl Islands, 166
 Pedro, Don, 65
 Pekin, 32. See Kanbalu
 Perestrello, Don, 58, 102
 Persia, 2, 3, 29, 32, 34-5, 47, 96, 98
 Persian Gulf, 15, 20, 35, 78, 96
 Peru, 154, 178, 215-30, 234
 Peter the Hermit, 18
 Philip II, King of Spain, 234
 Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt, 55, 231
 Philippine Islands, 147 n., 178-9
 Phœnicians, 19, 49
 Pilgrims, 8-12, 17, 19
Pinta, 117-8, 121, 123, 126, 128-9
 Pinzon, Martin Alonso, 112, 117, 121, 126, 128, 130
 Pinzon, Vicente Yañez, 117, 157, 172, 233
 Pizarro, Francisco, 158, 213-29, 234
 Pizarro, Gonzalez, 227-9
 Plate River, 173, 234
 Plato, 48
 Polo, Maffeo, 30-6, 231
 Polo, Marco, 23, 31-47, 125, 136, 231
 Polo, Nicolo, 30-6, 231
Polo, The Book of Ser Marco, 36
 Porto Rico, Island of, 132, 182
 Porto Santo, Island of, 58, 102, 106, 232
 Portulani, 54
 Prester John, 56, 63, 76 n., 95
 Ptolemy of Alexandria, 5 and n., 6, 8, 13 (map), 14, 231
 Puerto del Retrete, 157
 Pyrenees, 1, 3
 Quetzalcoatl, the Fair god, 188, 196
 Quiloa, King of, 88
 Quito, 227
 Red Sea, 10, 19-21, 78, 95-6
 Rhine, River, 21 n.
 Rio d'Ouro, 50, 62
 Rio Grand, 68
 Roger the Norman, 14
 Roman Church, 18
 Rubruquis, William de, 29-30, 231
 Rusticiano of Pisa, 36
 Sagres, 56-7, 62, 69, 232
 Sahara Desert, 55, 62
 Salamanca, 109
 Saldanha Bay, 91
 Samaritans, 9
 San Domingo, City of, 142, 147, 149, 151, 153, 158-9
 San Francisco, 104
 San Lucar, 174, 180
 San Salvador, Island of, 124
 Sandwich, 21 n.
Santa Maria, 117, 123, 126-8
 Santa Maria de Rabida, monastery of, 112
 Santiago (Cape Verde Islands), 76
 Sebastian, King of Portugal, 234
 Sebastian, Town of St., 158-9
 Seljukian Turks, 14, 16-9, 231
 Senegal, River, 62-3, 66-7, 232
 Seville, 111, 152-3, 211
 Shamo Desert, 32
 Shepherds' Bay, 74
 Siam, 95
 Siberia, 37, 47
 Sierra Leone, 51, 63-4, 102, 232

- Sindbad the Sailor, 12
- Sinai, 10
- Sin-Gui, City of, 44
- Sirmium, 9
- Socotra, Island of, 95, 233
- Sofala, 12
- Solis, Juan Diaz de, 172-3, 234
- Solyman the Merchant, 12
- Southampton, 21 n.
- Strabo, 6
- Suez Canal, 96 n.
- Sumatra, 36, 46 n., 93
- Syria, 3, 16-7, 21, 29

- Tacuba, 207
- Tampico, 183
- Tartars, origin of the spelling, 29 n.
- Teneriffe, 51
- Tenochtitlan, 188, 196. See Mexico, City of
- Tezcuco, City of, 207
- Tezcuco, Lake of, 207
- Tidore, Island of, 179
- Tierra del Fuego, 177
- Tigris, River, 20
- Timbuctoo, 55
- Timor, Island of, 80
- Tlascala, 190, 202, 206
- Tordesillas, Treaty of, 233
- Toscanelli, Paul, 103-4, 232
- Tours, Plain of, 3, 231
- Trade routes, E. and W.
 - ancient, 19
 - mediæval, 3, 20, 21 and n.
- Trebizond, 20, 35
- Triana, Rodrigo de, 123 n.
- Trinidad*, 174, 178-9
- Trinidad*, Island of, 141-2, 233
- Tristram, Nuno, 61-2
- Tunis, City of, 55, 64
- Turkestan, 31
- Tyre, 19

- Umbria, 24
- Ural River, 26
- Urban II, Pope, 18

- Valladolid, 152, 174
- Vaz, Tristram, 57-8
- Vela, Cape, 156-6
- Velasquez, Diego de, 184-5, 201
- Venice, 21 and n., 22, 31, 35-6, 44, 54, 101, 231
- Vera Cruz, 184, 200-1, 207
- Veragua, 150, 152
- Verde, Cape, 63, 65, 67, 232-3
- Verde Islands, Cape, 68, 76, 107, 132, 140, 147 n., 232-3
- Vespucci, Amerigo, 156, 172
- Victoria*, 179, 234
- Villa Rica, 187, 201
- Villejo, Alonso de, 144-5
- Vincent, Cape St., 101
- Volga, River, 25

- Yucatan, 183

- Zaitun, 46
- Zamorin of Calicut, 80-1, 83-5, 88
- Zanzibar, 37
- Zarco, John, 57-9, 232
- Zoroastrian Creed, 1
- Zumaco, Province of, 227

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